Halle Studies in the Anthropology of Eurasia

Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology

The Postsocialist Agrarian Question

Property Relations and the Rural Condition

Chris Hann & the
"Property Relations" Group

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The Postsocialist Agrarian Question

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In 1899, in *The Agrarian Question* (Die Agrarfrage), Karl Kautsky offered a socialist analysis of rural social relations in Germany. In a similar argument published almost simultaneously, Lenin claimed in *The Development of Capitalism in Russia* that agriculture was subject to the same basic laws of capitalist development as industry. The old peasantries were being subverted by the spread of wage labour, and social structures were becoming more polarised. Under Stalin, a 'solution' was eventually found in collectivisation, which transformed relations of property and production. Collective and state farms were to be factories in the countryside, 'total social institutions' for their members and workers. Even so, distinctive features of the agricultural sector continued to make themselves felt. Socialist institutions concealed some important continuities, notably in the functioning of the 'personal plot', which in some countries formed the basis of a large informal economy.

A century after the publications of Kautsky and Lenin, the contributors to this volume explore the mix of continuity and change in the countryside following the demise of socialist regimes. They are concerned not with the political polemics of the past but with the multifaceted realities of postsocialist rural life throughout Eurasia. As in other sectors, the principle of private property has been strongly reasserted in agriculture, but the ideal of a countryside dominated by capitalised family farmers owning the land they cultivate has proved elusive. Entrepreneurial adaptations have been hindered by the absence of farming skills among the younger rural population, the lack of tools and financing to put newly owned land to use, and the bleak conditions of agricultural markets worldwide. Many rural people experience the break-up of socialist farms as a retrograde move, socially as well as technologically. Their living standards have declined relative to the standards of towns, and often in absolute terms as well.

Property offers a helpful window through which to understand the problems of postsocialist change, because the virtues of private property have been so loudly touted by the new governments and the international bodies on which they depend. The restitution or creation of private property rights over the means of production, including the land itself, may bring emotional satisfaction to some, but ownership in itself does not help villagers to cope with their new problems. Whether or not they themselves have seen any increase in their privately owned assets, many citizens perceive a decline in their public entitlements. The standard liberal model privileges private ownership but neglects questions of social identity and the norms and values of the community. The experiences of rural inhabitants highlight a more general need to move beyond the analysis of property *rights* to a wider analysis of property *relations*.

The case studies collected here derive from the first cycle of projects carried out at the Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology. Chris Hann argues in his introduction that anthropologists approaching postsocialist property relations must supplement their analyses of changes in the political economy by addressing the condition of the 'moral economy'.

Halle Studies in the Anthropology of Eurasia

General Editors:

Chris Hann, Richard Rottenburg, Burkhard Schnepel, Shingo Shimada

Volume 1

LIT

Chris Hann
and the "Property Relations" Group

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Cover photo: "Family and friends ploughing and planting a potato field in the Rhodope Mountains, Bulgaria" taken by Barbara Cellarius in June 1997.

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Preface to the Series

Chris Hann

The Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology (MPISA) began its work in Halle (Saale), Germany, at the end of 1999. Its research staff, consisting mainly of Ph.D. students and postdoctoral fellows, approaches anthropology as a modern social science and emphasises comparison, in principle worldwide. In practice, however, fieldwork methods and the long dominance of ethnography in the discipline have led to strong particularising tendencies. Along the continuum between conducting micro-studies of particular communities and making global comparisons, most anthropologists draw on regional or 'area studies' literatures. Even dedicated generalisers often find that the gains achieved through examining their findings against data from neighbouring regions exceed the gains to be won elsewhere. Hence, despite criticism that may seem increasingly persuasive in an age of accelerating globalisation, regional traditions have remained prominent in anthropology.

But how exactly should we define the regions or areas to be studied? One of MPISA's two departments currently focuses on the vast regions of Asia and Europe that experienced Marxist-Leninist or Maoist regimes in the recent past. Socialist rule, though differentially experienced, brought a new measure of unity and comparability to a highly diverse land mass. This delimitation of the area of study makes sense in terms of the significance that most people in these countries continue to attach to their recent history, as a benchmark in coming to terms with current transformations.

The analysis of radical social reordering on this scale poses a challenge to anthropology. How did the consolidation of socialism and its later disintegration affect 'everyday' consciousness and social relations? And just as importantly, what did *not* change during this double rupture? The anthropologist's first and most basic task is to observe and offer accounts of how people live their lives, in places and social contexts that other disciplines by and large ignore. Empirical documentation through fieldwork lies at the core of most MPISA projects. It may sound easy enough, but we know that there is no such thing as perfectly objective observation in the social sciences. Researchers may try—should try—to keep their hypotheses and methods separate from their personal values and political sympathies. But given the

depth of the political divide in the years of the Cold War, the personal ingredients that enter into every anthropological field project often carry exceptional weight when Western researchers investigate the postsocialist world.

Anthropologists working in the postsocialist countries also face theoretical challenges, many of them transcending disciplinary boundaries. For example, we can hardly ignore a large interdisciplinary literature when we tackle topics such as globalisation and transnationalism. The postsocialist countries have been opened up to the rest of the world—yet a closer inspection reveals that the majority of their citizens are still not very mobile. Like most people in most other parts of the world, they look to their nation-state as their prime frame of reference, a 'modernist' reflex that contradicts exaggerated academic diagnoses of postmodernity.

The topic of collective memory has also been fertile in recent years: here researchers face the double task of uncovering histories that were repressed under socialism while also accounting for the fact that so many people look back nostalgically on a system that, to its detractors, epitomised brutality and moral evil. Such differences in perception are pertinent to current efforts to promote 'human rights' in the postsocialist countries. If the moral underpinnings of previous communities are undermined or ignored and existential security jeopardised, then the insistence on privileging an individual subject as the bearer of rights may be misunderstood or rejected as a 'Western' imposition. Similar issues arise in worldwide debates about 'civil society', the significance of 'trust' in social relations and about how to combat 'corruption'.

The postsocialist countries of Eurasia have provided attractive models of peaceful institutional transformation, but they have also supplied numerous cases of violent conflict. Anthropological explanations for these patterns may require a reappraisal of key terms such as 'ethnicity' or 'culture'. Debates around the latter concept are of particular interest, given the central role this term has played in the history of anthropology. To what extent, for example, can we explain the differential effects of neo-liberal economic reforms in the postsocialist world in terms of 'cultural' factors? There are some signs that other disciplines are increasingly recognising the value of anthropological contributions, but we need to be careful that our message is not oversimplified or bowdlerised. This happens all too easily when 'culture' is advanced as the ultimate explanation for the failure of particular groups to develop in the manner predicted by some external model.[1]

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[1] See the papers from our first international conference: C. M. Hann (ed.), *Postsocialism: Ideals, Ideologies and Practices in Eurasia* (London: Routledge, 2002); German translation: *Postsozialismus* (Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 2002).

For these and many other exciting issues in contemporary anthropology—indeed, for every possible agenda and style in the social sciences—the postsocialist countries currently provide an endlessly instructive laboratory. Yet memories of socialism, still so strong at the beginning of a new century, are bound to fade, and many of its institutional legacies have already weakened or disappeared. As the bases for comparability change, it makes increasing sense to adopt wider perspectives, both in time and in space. We have thus specified Eurasia, without qualification, in the title of this series, potentially including large populations in South and East Asia as well as the Middle East, the Mediterranean and western Europe. The appointment of Richard Rottenburg, Burkhard Schnepel, and Shingo Shimada to the new *Institut für Ethnologie* at the Martin Luther University of Halle-Wittenberg in 2002 puts us in a unique position to do justice to this vast canvas. In a long-term historical perspective, Eurasia must be seen as a single entity. As Jack Goody has demonstrated over the years, all of the principal fields of anthropology can be fruitfully explored here. We may even gain a better understanding of Marxist-Leninist socialisms if we place them in wider Eurasian contexts of changing moral systems and political and religious movements.

The goal of this series is, then, to improve our understanding of social processes in present-day Eurasia, informed by careful attention to the past, thereby complementing the knowledge produced by other disciplines and advancing comparative anthropological knowledge. The reasons why most parts of this land mass, including Europe, are under-represented in the modern anthropological literature are well known. The scholars who created the discipline concentrated on the study of nonindustrial indigenous peoples, exotic tribesmen in distant colonies rather than compatriots in their homelands. Some of these homelands, however, were intensively studied by 'national ethnographers'; their legacies are still tangible, from folk museums to the political slogans of populists and nationalists. In some places the scholarly traditions of 'national ethnology' have persisted strongly, whereas in others they have been replaced by entirely new styles of enquiry. Nowadays, everywhere one looks in the world, both native scholars and foreigners come in many guises. Better mutual understanding is called for, and perhaps the distinction will eventually be eroded.

MPISA aims to play a constructive role in these continuing conversations. The intellectual legacies of particularist nationalisms and of the (pseudo-) universalist ideology of Marxism-Leninism should not be exaggerated. In recent years, the impact of 'cultural studies' on the postsocialist academy has probably exceeded the continuing force of these earlier traditions; like other new fashions coming from the West, it probably deserves a

more critical reception. While the spread of new programmes in social or cultural anthropology can also be viewed as a form of academic imperialism, it is no part of our ambitions at MPISA to impose a new paradigm. We are committed to comparison and generalisation, but also to meticulous fieldwork methods in the tradition of Malinowski. We are committed to respect for the beliefs and practices of those we study and also for the diverse intellectual interests of those with whom we cooperate in other research institutions. As with the multiplicity of the beliefs and practices we study in the world, there is value in the sheer diversity of the scholarly activities that emerged under names such as anthropology, *ethnologie* and *etnografiya* in the era of empires and nationalisms. At another level, however, contemporary anthropology needs a broader vision. It needs to shake off its strong association with the study of the primitive and the exotic and become genuinely global in its comparisons. From this perspective, more sustained attention to Eurasia and a renewed focus on its historical unity might launch the transformation of our parochial scholarly traditions into a mature cosmopolitan science.

Preface

The unity of social organization in Eurasia, *Leitmotiv* of this series, originates in the discovery and spread of agriculture in the distant past. What better way to launch the series than with an investigation of the agricultural realities of the present era, following a century of political convulsions and unprecedented technological and social transformations in rural life.

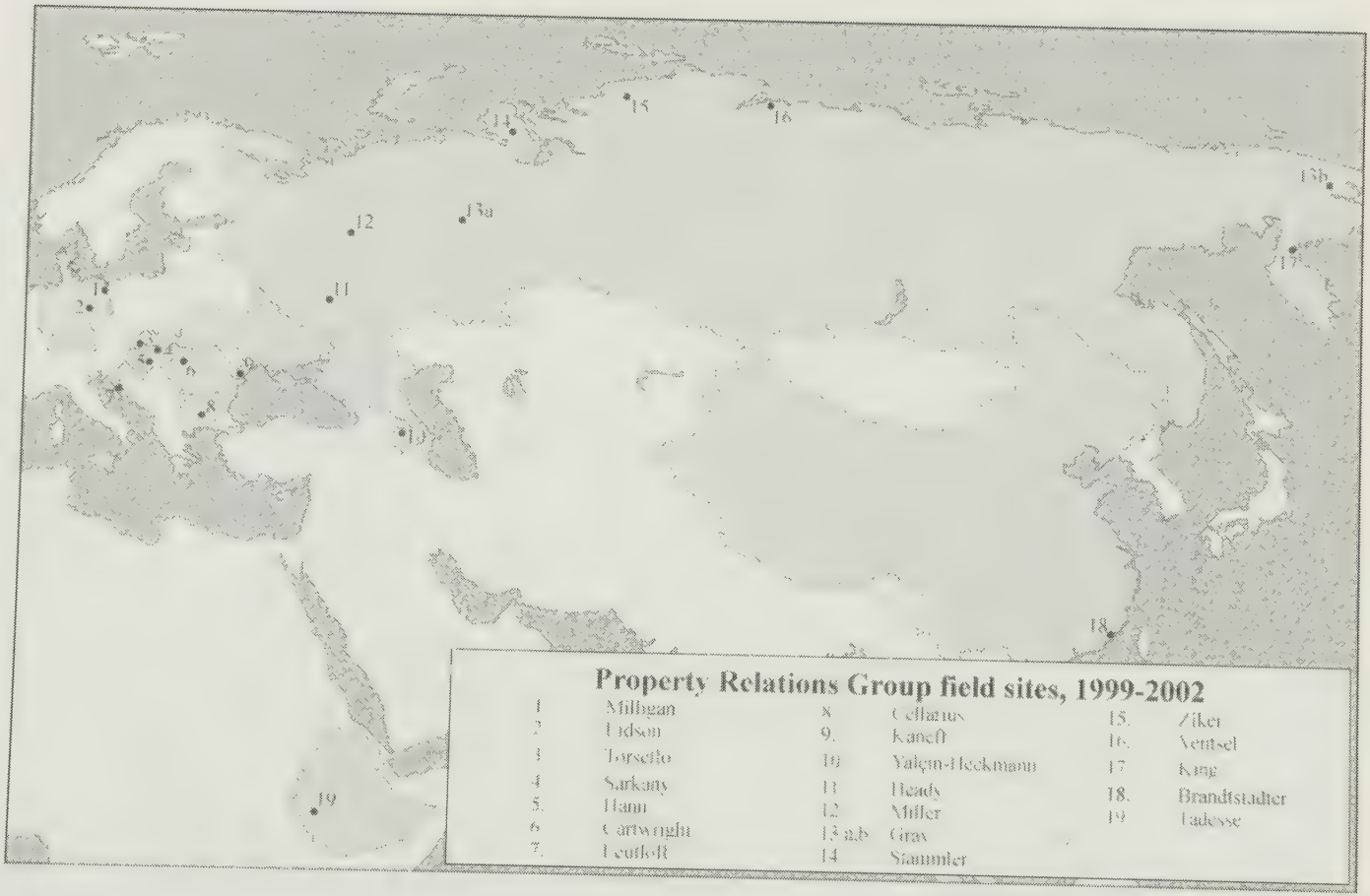
Most of the work reported here was begun at the end of 1999 or early 2000, and at the time of this writing, several projects are still running in one form or another. To facilitate an interim stocktaking, I organised an informal week-long seminar in June 2002 in my own field site in Hungary. The 'Tázlár Workshop' has already entered the folklore of our young institute. Preliminary versions of most of the chapters of this book were presented there. I am grateful to all my friends in the village who made the event possible, and to Viktoria Zeng for excellent logistics.

Since 2000, we have also organised numerous workshops and conferences in Halle itself (full reports of all our activities can be read and downloaded at the homepage www.eth.mpg.de). Many of our visitors have influenced these chapters. I cannot name them all here, but the following have been particularly generous with their time and inspiration: Caroline Humphrey, Yulian Konstantinov, Frances Pine, Nigel Swain, Nikolai Vakhtin and Katherine Verdery.

I also want to thank my colleagues and co-authors, all foundation scholars of this institute. Wherever their careers take them next, I am confident that they will recall the turn-of-the-century years in Halle as a period of some turbulence (Halle is, after all, itself a postsocialist city) but also of much good fun and great creativity.

For expert help in preparing the manuscript we are indebted externally to Jane Kepp and Christina Kincaid, and internally to Ralph Orlowski, Berit Westwood and Sevdalina Wiezorrek. Gerd-Roland Müller drew almost all of the maps, and Judith Orland helped us to design the cover.

Chris Hann
February 2003


Property Relations Group field sites, 1999-2002
1 Milligan
2 Eidson
3 Torsello
4 Sarkany
5. Hann
6 Cartwright
7. Leuffelt
8 Cellarius
9. Kaneff
10 Yalçın-Heckmann
11 Heady
12 Miller
13 a,b Gray
14 Stammler
15. Ziker
16. Ventsel
17 King
18. Brandtstadter
19 Tadesse

Chapter 1
Introduction
Decollectivisation and the Moral Economy

Chris Hann

> No other term seems to offer itself to describe the way in which, in peasant and in early industrial communities, many 'economic' relations are regulated according to non-monetary norms. These exist as a tissue of customs and usages until they are threatened by monetary rationalisations and are made self-conscious *as* a 'moral economy'. In this sense, the moral economy is summoned into being in resistance to the economy of the 'free market'.
>
> — E. P. Thompson, *Customs in Common*

I grew up in a new town in south-east Wales. The surrounding countryside was populated by dairy and sheep farmers, whose fields were small and enclosed by hedges. For my university education I moved east, first to Oxford, where the fields were already significantly larger, and then to Cambridge, where the wheat and rape fields were enormous and I sometimes searched in vain for hedges. These visible differences across the landscape of southern Britain have much to do with climate and terrain, with branches of production and technologies. Less visible differences between the family farming of the marches and the agribusiness of East Anglia are connected to the ways in which the land is held or owned—in other words, to questions of property. This juridical dimension cannot be read simply from the appearance of the landscape, and knowledge of legal rights may in turn offer little guidance into living standards, work patterns, group relations, inequalities, and notions of belonging to a community. The contributors to this volume, however, share an expanded understanding of *property relations,* which includes all of these topics.

Nowadays I work in Germany. Travelling from west to east in this country, I am reminded of the observations of my youth. In this case, the causes seem more self-evident. It is not a different ecology but a different political history, in particular the experience of socialist collectivisation,

which is responsible for much larger fields in the regions that used to constitute the German Democratic Republic. When I continue farther eastwards to one of my research sites in south-east Poland, the fields become small again, smaller even than those I recall from my childhood in Wales. Crossing the border into western Ukraine, again without any apparent ecological change, the pattern of the landscape reverts back to that of East Germany. As in England, the puzzles presented by the landscape can be solved only by a careful historical investigation of land tenure systems. It transpires that East Germany, or at any rate many districts east of the River Elbe, had larger fields than most western districts long before Soviet-style collectivisation.

It seems reasonable to infer that large fields, whether in East Anglia or East Germany, correspond to large-scale production units, whereas small fields, whether in Wales or in Poland, imply smaller units. Do these production units in turn correspond to ownership units? In Poland, the answer is yes: the dominance of the 'family farm' was maintained under socialism and has been further strengthened following the disintegration of state and collective farms in the 1990s.[1] In postsocialist Germany and Ukraine, however, the large production unit does not correspond to the ownership unit. In East Germany, the mismatch arose during the socialist period. As John Eidson and Gordon Milligan show in chapter 2, the establishment of socialist cooperatives in East Germany (completed in 1960) involved a significant degree of coercion, but legal title to privately owned land remained with individuals—even though, in the course of farm reorganisation, it usually became impossible to identify the original plots. Although the land registry was neglected under socialism, the very existence of this 'empty title' (Verdery n.d.) simplified the process of decollectivising in the 1990s. The *controlling* rights (or powers) of the cooperative were replaced by a reaffirmation of the private rights of the legal owners. If large-scale farming was to continue—as it usually did—then rental contracts had to be agreed upon between the cooperatives or their successor companies and the myriad owners.

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[1] A state farm (Russian: *sovkhoz*) is the rural equivalent of a state-owned industrial factory. A collective farm (*kolkhoz*) was, in Soviet ideology, a lower form of property, because its land and other wealth belonged not to the state but to the collectivity of the members. This model was taken over with only minor variations by most other states of the Soviet bloc. In practice, the two forms tended to converge, notably through the introduction of regular wages for collective farm workers (replacing the 'work unit' system) and the extension of social security and pensions to the entire rural population. However, the difference in property forms had major consequences in the decollectivisation process, as many contributors to this volume show. In the following chapter, Eidson and Milligan explain in the early years there were several gradations of collective organisation. In German, as in other eastern European languages, the term for this organisation was adapted from the pre-existing word for cooperative; in these countries we therefore speak of 'producers' cooperatives' rather than collective farms.

In Ukraine, too, large fields are now likely to have a multitude of owners. The difference is that those who now hold title are very unlikely to be original owners. The Soviet Union nationalised land in 1918; today, more than a decade after its founding, the Russian Federation is still unable to provide unambiguous guarantees of private ownership rights over this 'ultimate good'. In any case, the juridical niceties of decollectivisation are, as several contributors to this book explain, of little interest to most villagers. In the Ukrainian case (described by Kaneff and Yalçın-Heckmann in chapter 8), the 1990s brought a highly egalitarian redistribution of the land. Most of it is in fact still farmed in large units by the successors to the socialist organisations, but an observant visitor may notice, both in Ukraine and in East Germany, some signs of private initiative. Private entrepreneurs are aspiring to emulate the Western family farm model or are adopting new legal forms such as limited partnerships, which in practice are also often based on kin ties. As a result, new forms of inequality are emerging. The new farmers seldom own enough land for a viable enterprise; rather, they must compete with the successor institutions of the collective farms and cooperatives to conclude leasehold agreements with a multitude of owners.

These examples from Poland, East Germany, and Ukraine show that relations between productive systems and property during and after socialism are more complicated than is commonly supposed. Within each of these countries there is, of course, considerable regional variation. Within regions, and even within localities, deviations from the norm are likely. It follows that the singular 'postsocialist agrarian question' of our volume title is an enormous simplification of the realities we wish to explore. But this was also true when Karl Kautsky published *Die Agrarfrage* in 1899. Then as now, the singular form has the merit of directing attention to the larger context of transformation, in time as well as space. The agrarian question, as it is approached in this volume, is concerned, on the one hand, with the production of agricultural goods and the efficiency of technologies, property rules, and markets and, on the other, with the political, social, and moral consequences of these institutions in rural communities.

The question also addresses the relationship between countryside and town, a tension that has its ultimate origins in the expansion of plough agriculture and rural-urban differentiation in Eurasia in the late Bronze Age (Childe 1939). A more proximate starting point is the eighteenth century, when it became possible to rephrase the question in terms of the causal relations between industrialisation and concomitant changes in production and property systems in the rural sector. The case of England, the first industrial nation, is arguably the most instructive; certainly it has continued to influence social theory down to the present day. The English enclosure

movements can be viewed as a comprehensive rationalisation of previous (feudal) tenurial and productive systems, including a massive expansion of the market for 'free' labour. Decades of revisionist scholarship have modified but not substantially refuted the insights of Karl Polanyi (1944) and Edward Thompson (1991), to whom we are indebted for the still fertile ideas of 'great transformation' and 'moral economy', respectively. Can these terms be of use in analysing socialist collectivisation in the twentieth century? How do collectivisation and its later unravelling compare with other attempts to address the agrarian question in the industrial era?

Behind the agrarian question lurk tantalising deeper issues for the economic anthropologist—issues that have also preoccupied other social scientists, historians, and even philosophers. What are the implications of particular property forms and productive technologies for the ways human groups live and work together? What are the origins of exclusive property rights in land? Do those who own and work the land always feel positive emotional ties of identity with it? Does the propensity for communitywide solidarity and cooperation always fall with the decline of 'natural economy'? How far is peasant decision taking best approached in terms of individualist, 'rational' maximising strategies? Is agriculture everywhere associated with a domain of impersonal exchanges, however limited? Why is the 'free' market necessarily embedded in laws and social constraints? When is it represented as being otherwise? Do such representations merely disguise new forms of economic and social embedding? Is the rural household a key unit of ownership, as well as a unit of production and consumption? Is reciprocity an underlying principle of social life, both within and between households?

If the evidence of postsocialist rural transformation is to help us address such questions, we need to proceed carefully and begin with some basic distinctions. Theories claiming a *general* validity can be distinguished from those that assert the need to recognise the *specific* conditions of agricultural production and rural ways of life. Most anthropologists will sympathise with the latter. As a next step, it seems reasonable to introduce spatial and temporal distinctions. In this introductory chapter I offer a brief review of agrarian developments in Russia, China, Germany, Poland, Hungary, and Bulgaria and distinguish between three time periods: before, during, and after socialism. Finally, I distinguish between 'objective' changes in the realm of political economy and people's 'subjective' experience of these changes. Objective and subjective come together in the moral economy and on the slippery ground of ideology; this is where the anthropological contribution is most important.

The Projects

All the chapters in this volume are based on work undertaken at the Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology (MPISA) between 1999 and 2002. Not all of our projects have been concerned exclusively with agriculture. Carolin Leutloff-Grandits, for example, has worked in Croatia, where collectivisation was never fully implemented. She has therefore paid more attention to other issues, notably housing, though she concentrates on agricultural matters in her contribution here (chapter 5). The nature of 'cultural property' has been an important subsidiary theme for several members of the group.[2] Not all projects have been based in Eurasia. Wolde Gossa Tadesse writes in chapter 15 about his work on changing property relations in southern Ethiopia. His material nonetheless fits well into our comparative framework, both because Ethiopian socialist farm organisation was based on an East German model and because more recently the recommendations of international actors such as the World Bank have been consistent with the recipes offered to the postsocialist countries of Eurasia.

The researchers prepared their proposals to MPISA in late 1999. Some proposals were later modified after group discussions, but no attempt was made to impose a template on them. Some members of the group, notably those in the Siberian cluster, quickly developed close cooperation, and comparative analysis has been strongly emphasised throughout.[3] Even so, each project remained the individual responsibility of one researcher.

The Max Planck Society has a preponderance of natural science institutes. Although social anthropological research cannot hope to emulate the rigor of the laboratory, this does not mean that anthropologists must abandon scientific standards altogether. Rather than testing by experiments, our principal research instrument is fieldwork among the people we study. This fieldwork is usually a mixture of relatively formal enquiry (interviews with officials, local census data collection, etc.) and 'participant observation', that is, living among the research subjects, as unobtrusively as possible, in order to experience social life as the people themselves live it. A large element of serendipity usually exerts itself in such fieldwork, and the rigorous testing of hypotheses in diverse locations is difficult.

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[2] See Kasten 2002. Another group member, Thomas Widlok, worked primarily on theoretical issues (see, e.g., Widlok 2002). Further details of all MPISA projects and downloadable Working Papers are available at the website http://www.eth.mpg.de

[3] This is most evident in the jointly authored chapters, but in one way or another, comparison enters into every chapter. It should be pointed out here that the analyses are, in most cases, still only provisional. Further articles will develop new themes as well as refine the interpretations offered here. In most cases, a full monograph is also planned.

Rather than attempt to adapt all proposals to a single hypothesis, we identified in the early phase of our discussions a number of key themes, which all researchers were encouraged to follow up in their fieldwork. The most important of these general themes was social inequality, not only within the rural context but also between countryside and town. Everyone was encouraged to document changes in political economy: not just the fate of socialist farming organisations but also the fate of encompassing power structures. Only in the post-fieldwork phase of analysis did we hit on the complementary concept of the moral economy as an encapsulation of subjective experiences, norms, and values, on which all of us had collected data. The moral economy is Thompson's (1991: 340) 'tissue of customs and usages', rendered explicit in new ways by the dilemmas of postsocialist transformation. Davide Torsello's chapter 3 in this volume, in which he investigates qualities of trust both in the socialist cooperative and in interpersonal relations in the community, is a good example of how the two economies, the political and the moral, can be brought together.

The more general *Fragestellung* (so obvious that we seldom needed to articulate it explicitly) was as follows. A decade after the collapse of the regimes of the Soviet bloc, there is widespread recognition that the replacement of socialist institutions by Western models of capitalist market economy, private property, and civil society has not brought the rapid beneficial changes that many experts and ordinary citizens alike hoped for and even expected. What new insights can the theory and methods of social anthropology bring to social scientists' attempts to comprehend this 'transition'? How can we explain the occasional successes but also make sense of the failures and of people's deep, recurrent feelings of disillusionment and insecurity?

Universalist Theories and Agrarian Specifics

The twentieth-century contributions of Polanyi and Thompson were strongly influenced by the tradition of Marx and his many followers. The international socialist or communist movement defined itself as a movement of the new working class, the proletariat. Marx's personal lack of empathy for the European peasantry of his day is well known. On the basis of limited exposure to the vineyards of Trier and its hinterland, rather than any systematic research, he wrote famously of 'the idiocy of rural life'. He dismissed the rural dwellers of France as resembling so many potatoes in a sack, quite incapable of class-conscious revolutionary action. Revisionist scholars have modified this picture—for example, by pointing to Marx's positive comments about English yeomen and, more significantly, to the potential he seemed to recognise at the end of his life in the rural population of backward

Russia (Leonard and Kaneff 2002; Shanin 1984). However, the basic lack of sympathy is difficult to deny: Marx and Engels were modernists, free of nostalgia for older forms of life in the countryside, and their 'orthodox' followers saw no need to work out a distinct body of theory for the rural sector.

Significant differences in the forms of pre-industrial society that capitalism encountered in its uneven expansion across Eurasia and elsewhere forced succeeding generations of Marxists to pay more attention to these matters. They were obliged to respond not only to the challenge posed by populists in underdeveloped Russia but also to conditions in the more densely populated, developed, and recently united German state. How were communist revolutionaries to account for a sector that was dominated by small-scale producers who, unlike the new workers, owned their own means of production and showed little sign of emulating either the English or the American road of capitalist progress? According to the orthodox view, as articulated by Kautsky (1899), sooner or later this sector would undergo similar processes of capitalist expropriation, so that no separate model needed to be developed.[4] Almost simultaneously, Lenin (1977 [1899]) interpreted statistical evidence in a highly selective manner to conclude that capitalism was already rampant in the rural sector, even in backward Russia (Kingston-Mann 1983). In later generations, numerous 'neo-Marxists' were to mount creative challenges to this orthodox analysis of the agrarian sector, but the early orthodox view proved decisive politically.

Diametrically opposed to Marxism is the liberal tradition in economics. Most economists reject the analysis of exploitation and surplus value, since their assumption of utility-maximising, rational individuals leads them to set aside sociological and political issues. According to the 'neoclassical' paradigm, the logic of the market economy should apply in the agricultural sector as in any other. It is further taken as axiomatic in property rights theory that the possibility of purchasing and alienating the land itself, combined with security of ownership, gives the farmer the incentives he needs to work most efficiently and to innovate. These liberal economic theories were perfected in the late nineteenth century but enjoyed a new wave of popularity in the last decades of the twentieth, both inside and outside the academy. Policy prescriptions following the collapse of socialism therefore favoured far-reaching marketisation and placing the ownership of productive resources, including land, in private hands. As with the Marxists, there is some variety in this liberal camp. An interesting variant of the neoclassical para-

[4] Kautsky's work emerged from political debates inside Germany's Social Democratic Party over policy towards the rural population. It did not succeed in silencing revisionist voices: see David 1903. For further discussion, see Steenson 1991: 101-1.

digm is the 'new institutional economics'. Its adherents introduce more realistic assumptions concerning real-world constraints affecting actors' behaviour, without giving up the basic postulate of individualist rationality. I return to the pertinence of their theories and policy prescriptions later.

For orthodox proponents of each of these traditions, it was unnecessary to alter a general body of theory to account for the specific conditions of agricultural production. For representatives of a third tradition, these conditions made all the difference. The agrarian economist A. V. Chayanov was the outstanding figure in this third camp. Unlike Lenin, Chayanov (1966) did not see the Russian countryside becoming polarised into capitalist classes. Instead, he emphasised crucial contrasts between the countryside and the urban, industrial sector. Whereas the factory was established outside of the household and relied on formally free wage labour, residents of the rural household, though also guided by rational criteria, would reach different decisions because their labour force consisted of family members. Unlike Lenin, who emphasised exploitation by a class of rich peasants, the kulaks, Chayanov was a 'methodological individualist'. He analysed the 'self-exploitation' of the rural household (without looking in detail at inequalities of age and gender within it), and he explained inequalities in landholding and work in terms of the developmental cycle, notably the changing 'labour-consumer ratio'. Hopes for a gradualist transformation of the Russian countryside along the lines favoured by Chayanov, which included the formation of cooperatives to facilitate the vertical integration of production, were eventually dashed by collectivisation. Some of his ideas were later adapted in anthropology and applied to quite different types of societies (Sahlins 1974). They have also had considerable influence in sociological writings on the peasantry (Shanin 1987, 1990).

Many sociologists and anthropologists have gone further than Chayanov in exploring the constraints and tensions of living together in small communities—characteristics that have important consequences for economic as well as social outcomes. For example, George Foster's (1965) notion of 'limited good', developed in the context of Mexican peasants in the 1950s, has been revisited in efforts to explain the reluctance of many villagers, notably in Russia, to follow entrepreneurial strategies by taking their privately owned land out of collective cultivation and embarking on independent initiatives (see Hivon 1998; Miller and Heady, chapter 9; Visser n.d.). James Scott (1976) adapted Thompson's concept of moral economy, originally designed for use in analysing unstable food markets in early industrial towns, to explain the 'safety-first' strategies of peasants in South East Asia. Some of the case studies in this volume find a similar prioritising of collective welfare that is made explicit when called into question in the

course of decollectivisation. However, the concept of moral economy is versatile, and Susanne Brandtstädter (chapter 14) applies it in a quite different context, that of a village in one of China's wealthiest regions, where agriculture is no longer the basis of the local economy. She argues that the 'dividends' of lavish exchanges at life-cycle rituals are first and foremost the production of (kinship) relatedness. Irrespective of whether a community is prospering or on the brink of collapse, analyses of exchanges and changing property rules cannot ignore the norms and values that underpin personal and social identities. Such approaches may not be able to match the comprehensive explanatory elegance of the orthodox Marxist and neo-liberal paradigms, but they offer more realistic insights into the dynamics of social change in postsocialist communities.[5]

Socialist and Postsocialist Realities

The basic institutional forms of the Soviet extension of an urban, industrial division of labour to the rural, agricultural sector were copied almost everywhere that socialist ideas spread, including many countries outside Eurasia. The initial application was brutally repressive, especially in the Soviet Union and China, where the direct or indirect consequences of collectivisation included loss of life on a scale previously unknown in human history. Nothing in the later developments should lead us to lose sight of these atrocities. There was, however, great variation in the details of implementation, even within a single state. The ideology dictated that state ownership was superior to cooperative forms of ownership, which were in turn superior to bourgeois private ownership. But Marx and Engels left no precise guidance on how to organise the new farms. What eventually took shape were the products not only of socialist dogmas but also of the distinctive traditions of rural communities, which in some parts of the socialist world (not everywhere) had included highly 'collectivist' rules for repartitioning the land according to the needs of the household.

The socialist system was almost everywhere markedly dualistic. Alongside the complex division of labour of the new large enterprises, households continued to maintain some agricultural activity and/or to keep

[5] While the concept of moral economy may seem especially apt for the analysis of 'face-to-face' rural communities, it can also be deployed in other contexts. For example, Cahalen (2001) applies it in her study of a small town in postsocialist Poland. Thompson himself (1991) approved of Scott's adaptation but was ambivalent about loose applications of his term. A central element of his own research concerned violent resistance to the forces of the market when these jeopardised the supply of subsistence 'necessities'. The continued ability of the rural population to produce these goods for themselves has undoubtedly reduced the incidence of political protest.

some animals. 'Personal plots' were under the control of the socialist farm leadership, but even in the Soviet Union the use rights of village households—guarantees that the institution would provide them with an allotment allowing them to meet a high proportion of their subsistence needs and that they could market any available surpluses—were a secure and highly valued aspect of the property system. Western commentators in the Cold War period often noted that this 'private sector', as they insisted on calling it, contributed substantially to total agricultural production, even though it controlled only a tiny proportion of the total acreage.[6] They sometimes missed an important point. What they took to be compelling evidence of inefficiency in the socialist sector was, in some instances at least, evidence of a constructive compromise or synthesis, an alternative to the Western model of capitalised private farms operated by familial labour (an unrealistic ideal type in many Western countries nowadays).

In the socialist model, collective appropriation of the land facilitated plot consolidation and efficient, mechanised production, above all in the cereals branch. Of course, seasonality and other characteristics of agricultural work complicated the task of imposing factory-style controls. The more flexible regimes were also interested in maintaining high levels of production in branches that were harder to mechanise—branches in which the 'self-exploitation' of family members gave the rural household an advantage over the large-scale enterprise, notably animal breeding and labour-intensive branches of plant production such as vineyards. In this way, though conflict between management and farm members was frequent, new synergies could be generated. The large-scale institutions could assist their members with the provision of cheap inputs, particularly fodder, and they in turn might profit by expediting the sale of household produce through contracts with socialist enterprises. As for the villagers, many were able to modernise their living conditions to meet urban standards, aided by investment programmes in rural infrastructure (electricity, piped water, etc.), by the expansion of non-agricultural activities in the countryside, by the introduction of stable wages throughout the year, and by the incorporation of the rural population into the state's pension and social security system. Despite these welcome improvements, villagers might continue to perceive themselves and be perceived by other social groups as 'peasants', in part because they continued to produce a high proportion of the food they consumed, and what they sold on the market was largely the product of their labour, expended in traditional ways of 'self-exploitation'.

Clearly these are sweeping generalisations that cannot be sustained everywhere. Some countries, notably East Germany (described by Eidson

[6] See, for example, Wädekin 1982: 94–100.

and Milligan in chapter 2), had relatively advanced technologies and strong entrepreneurial traditions before they became socialist, whereas many smaller villages in the Soviet Union were long deprived of resources because they were scheduled to disappear. Socialist development could be as uneven as capitalist development. Nevertheless, according to a persuasive general characterisation of collectivisation across Eurasia, after an initial period that was full of trauma, violent resistance, policies of maximum extraction to benefit the embryonic industrial sector, and in some cases mass famine, subsequent generations of the rural population emerged as significant 'winners' of the socialist revolutions (Tepicht 1975). For the first time since the origins of agrarian societies during the Neolithic period, state resources flowed systematically into this sector rather than out of it. Remarkably, in the perspective of world history, peasants, who had been instrumental in bringing about revolutions in backward countries where the orthodox Marxists had least expected them, turned out to be among the major beneficiaries of the workers' movement. This can be readily documented in most countries in terms of improvements not only to infrastructure and education but also in the quality of housing and private ownership of consumer goods. Some villagers hardly knew what to do with their new wealth. They were able to support their relatives in the under-urbanised industrial sector with both produce and money. Such voluntary flows led to complex patterns of reciprocity within families, quite different from the antagonistic extraction policies pursued in the early years of socialism.

Jerzy Tepicht's (1975) provocative analysis of the 'peasant revolution of our time' looks even more convincing in the light of decollectivisation experiences. The subsidies paid by socialist governments to their farms were among the first to fall victim to the new logic of the 'market economy'. Again, the major exception is postsocialist East Germany, where farmers were, thanks to the evolution of European Union policies, able to enjoy higher levels of subsidy than before. Everywhere else, the 'price scissors', that is, the terms of trade between countryside and town, turned against the producers of agricultural commodities. Western economists suggested that rural incomes under socialism were simply too high, given the stage of economic development; they would inevitably have to be cut back (Newbery 1991).

But it would be wrong to view decollectivisation only in terms of the imposition of a neo-liberal model by external forces in the aftermath of political collapse. In some places, strong internal pressures were exerted in favour of restoring individual property rights—for example, because traditions of independent farming were bound up with national identity (Abrahams 2002). Leutloff-Grandits (chapter 5) found local people in a war-

ravaged district of Croatia critical of nationalist appropriations and supportive of the principle that houses and other property should be returned to their original owners. Many older villagers in eastern Europe felt morally or sentimentally impelled to insist on a return to the ownership patterns of the 1940s. Some were deeply dissatisfied if they failed to regain ownership of the particular plots that had belonged to their family in the past, regardless of whether those plots could be farmed efficiently with modern technology (Hann 1993).

But many of the old farms have no heirs, and in any case it is impossible to create a new structure of capitalised family farms overnight. The macroeconomic outcome has been a significant fall in agricultural output virtually everywhere. Large-scale farming persists on tracts of land that the operators, be they private farmers, companies, or successor cooperatives, must now rent from the private owners. Much land has gone out of production, and millions of landowners are only too happy to receive any income at all from their asset, since they are in no position to begin farming it themselves (because they are too old, no longer live near their plots, have no equipment to begin autonomous farming, etc.).

Local people themselves perceive and comment on the evident economic costs of the break-up of the old socialist synthesis. They are also likely to comment on the social implications, because few believe that decollectivisation has in fact benefited those it was intended to. Tatjana Thelen (n.d.) has documented a Hungarian case in which the descendants of those branded kulaks in the 1950s have been able to reassert themselves, but this may not be typical even for Hungary (Hann and Sárkány, Chapter 4). According to one widespread pattern, which is not necessarily incompatible with the thesis of kulak continuity, the successful entrepreneurs in the emerging systems are the former cooperative farm managers, whose networks and 'social capital' give them tremendous advantages in the unstable conditions of the new market economy (Kovács et al. 1998; Lampland 2002; Swain 1999, 2000c). So in addition to weakening the farm sector economically—both internally, in the viability of the basic units of production and ownership, and externally, vis-à-vis the urban, industrial sector—decollectivisation has had perverse consequences for social differentiation, reinforcing barriers it was ostensibly supposed to eliminate (Swain 2000a).[7] Let me now turn to some examples, country by country.

[7] For further overviews and case studies, see Abrahams, ed. 1996; Bridger and Pine, eds. 1998; Kideckel, ed. 1995; Leonard and Kaneff, eds. 2002; Meurs, ed. 1999, 2001; Pryor 1992; Swain 2000a; Swinnen, Buckwell, and Mathijs, eds. 1997; Szelényi, ed. 1998; Wädekin, ed. 1992.

Russia

Even in the nineteenth century, the questions of agricultural development addressed by Kautsky for Germany and Lenin for Russia were quite different in character. The Russian peasantry was not emancipated from serfdom until 1861. In the following decades, intellectuals engaged in lively debates over the 'communist' nature of primitive peasant communities. Populists (*narodniki*) found this image attractive, and so did many Marxists in the years before Lenin enunciated the orthodox view in 1899. Within a few years, the reforms of Prime Minister Stolypin accelerated the trends that Lenin had exaggerated, explicitly fostering a new class of commercially oriented farmers outside the commune (*mir, obshchina*). Interpretations of this period have long been controversial. For the Bolsheviks, Stolypin's farmers were self-evidently exploitative kulaks (Treadgold 1955). Whether or not this was so, recent research suggests that Russian agriculture was making impressive progress in the last years of the tsarist regime (Kerans 2001).

The tension between realistic, pragmatic views towards the rural sector and orthodox Marxist-Leninist views, deeply suspicious of the peasantry, persisted during the short-lived experiment with diverse organisational forms under the New Economic Policy (NEP) (Danilov 1999). In the momentous contest between the peasantry and the Bolsheviks, Chayanov and Bukharin were out-manoeuvred politically by Stalin, under whose leadership mass collectivisation was ruthlessly implemented from 1928 onwards. Collective and state-owned farms introduced industrial-style farming. The rationale was political rather than economic, but with the suppression of the market principle and private property rights in the factors of production, this distinction became increasingly meaningless. Collectivisation required savage repression and arguably left deeper, longer-lasting scars on Russian society than did any other measures taken by the regime. By squeezing consumption in the countryside, it may have released resources, including human resources, that facilitated the industrialisation drive in much the same way the English enclosures did. However, this labour was hardly 'free', and the necessity to invest in the new 'factories in the countryside' must have diverted resources away from other industrial objectives, thereby hindering long-term development. The Soviet passport controls that prevented free migration ensured the persistence of a relatively large population in the countryside; the socialist farms were grossly overstaffed by the standards of Western agribusiness.

No Western commentator seems to question that, even allowing for inadequate levels of investment, the economic performance of state and

collective farms was disastrous.[8] But anthropologists are also interested in other dimensions of these institutions. Thanks to Caroline Humphrey (1998), we have many insights into how the formal structures of a Soviet farm and the requirements made of it by external planners were modified by informal relations, manipulation, and negotiation. The collective farm allowed its members some scope to work individually, or rather as household units, on so-called personal plots. But it could also function to maintain the tradition of collectivism in the Russian countryside, the tradition with which Stolypin had tried to break. This organisation, which introduced mechanisation and other elements of 'modernity' into the countryside—some of them welcomed, others resented—preserved in certain fundamental ways the moral economy of the presocialist community. Some have argued that this continuity was broken in the course of technological innovation and farm mergers in the 1970s and 1980s, which amounted to a kind of 'socialist enclosure' (Fondahl 1998). For other analysts, the real rupture came only with the postsocialist great transformation (Anderson 1998; cf. Sneath 2000 on Mongolian pastoralists in China).

Although the evidence available is limited and biased towards peripheral regions inhabited by minority peoples, this long-term perspective may help to explain the stubborn failure of most ex-Soviet farmers to take advantage of the possibilities open to them in the 1990s to become independent entrepreneurs. Collective farms were formally dismantled and their land distributed to private owners (for contrasting examples of the principles adopted in this process, see Kaneff and Yalçın-Heckmann's chapter 8 on Ukraine and Azerbaijan). Yet many former collective and state farms have persisted de facto, undergoing little more than a change of name. Managerial decisions tend to remain in the hands of the previous elites. There is more than a suspicion that many of these farms should be reduced in size to overcome diseconomies of scale, but they continue to provide many 'informal' services to their members, a practice that may be interpreted as a disguise for persisting 'feudal' dependencies (Miller n.d.; Miller and Heady, chapter 9; cf. Nikulin 2002).

As Patty Gray points out in chapter 10, essentially the same trends and tensions can be found in those vast regions of Russia where forestry, hunting, fishing, and reindeer herding form the mainstays of the economy (in the Soviet classification, which persists in postsocialist Russia, all of these activities belong to the sector 'agriculture'). The equivalent of the household

[8] According to the criteria employed by Soviet accountants, some farms might nonetheless report 'profits'. Of course, levels of investment and performance fluctuated over time. In the Khrushchev period, the 'virgin lands' schemes were important in regime propaganda, though even the long-term consequences were almost entirely negative.

plot often took the forms of subsistence fishing and individual ownership of deer within collective herds. In their contribution to this volume, Florian Stammler and Aimar Ventsel (chapter 11) compare and contrast the paths followed in the 'dirigiste' Sakha Republic and the neo-liberal Yamal peninsula. These authors, together with John Ziker (chapter 12) and Alexander King (chapter 13), document remote regions of Siberia that enjoyed high levels of subsidy under the ancien regime. The decline in collective provisioning has in some instances been catastrophic (see also Kasten, ed., 2002). These chapters explore a considerable variety of organisational forms, which might almost be compared to the variety of the NEP period. It may still be too early to predict which of these new forms will prove resilient, but the chapters dealing with Russia offer enough evidence to suggest that at least some collectivist institutions and legacies of the collectivist moral economy will continue to play a significant role for a long time yet (cf. Humphrey 1998; Konstantinov and Vladimirova 2002).

China

China has been aptly described as 'the agrarian state par excellence' (Bray 1984: 1). In large areas of the country, the ecology and technologies of wet rice production permitted highly intensive forms of exploitation over millennia, in which the household was the key unit of production. This production supported dense rural populations, intricate marketing networks, and a highly developed commercial sector. China failed, however, to accomplish the industrial breakthrough that originated in north-western Europe, and its problems of backwardness were accentuated by the impact of colonialism and commercial capitalism in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The crisis of the countryside was vividly documented by one of the early students of Bronislaw Malinowski, Fei Hsiao-Tung, following his fieldwork in the 1930s (Fei 1939). He paid particular attention to unequal property relations, since the villagers he studied were obliged to pay high rents to their urban landlords.

After the communist takeover in 1949, China moved promptly to promote cooperatives along Soviet lines. The most significant departure from the prototype was China's swift progression under Mao beyond the producers' cooperative to the 'people's commune'. This was a vast organisation, usually embracing several villages, which had responsibility for all social, political, and economic affairs, not merely for agriculture. Its introduction proved to be an economic catastrophe that cost even more lives than Soviet collectivisation. Yet despite the chaos of the Cultural Revolution of the later Maoist period, the picture was not as uniformly bleak as sometimes imagined in the West. Not all forms of personal property were abolished in

favour of communal ownership: rural dwellings continued to be privately owned and inherited (even in the new housing regime of the cities, occupancy rights were in practice inherited). Moreover, Maoist ideology promoted the rapid development of industry and 'sideline activities' in rural areas, bringing major benefits to many peripheral regions (see, e.g., Ruf 1998).

Mao's death was followed, from 1978 onwards, by the rapid dismantling of the higher-level collective institutions.[9] Household economic initiative was successfully revived, not through restoration of full individual ownership of the land but through long-term leases (initially usually for 15 years, but later extended). The rural sector prospered under the so-called responsibility system, in part, at least, because scale economies play no major role in wet rice systems, so the devolution of production to the household did not create the inefficiencies that it brought in most of agricultural Eurasia. However, rural growth rates have fallen back in comparison with urban growth rates in recent years. There is tremendous regional variation and much ambiguity in property relations at all levels. On the one hand, this appears to refute the economists' argument that the tight specification of property rights is essential for growth and innovation. On the other, while affording scope to new entrepreneurial classes, legal ambiguities such as the failure rigorously to define and protect the category of collectively owned village land may leave citizens vulnerable to interference and appropriation by the strong state.[10] Alongside a great surge in growth and entrepreneurial energy, the Chinese case has also brought a remarkable efflorescence of 'traditional' collective institutions such as the lineage and the temple (Brandtstädter 2001 and chapter 14).

East Germany

There are many good reasons for paying close attention to the German case, which is examined in this volume by Eidson and Milligan (chapter 2). The first is its historic significance, not only in prompting Kautsky to pose *die Agrarfrage* in the Marxist tradition but also in affecting other theoreticians of the time (e.g., Max Weber 1981). A second arises out of the political division of Germany in 1945 and the opportunity to compare developments in the Federal Republic with the socialist transformation imposed upon the farmers of East Germany. Such comparisons must proceed with great cau-

[9] For discussion of whether the post-Mao period can be considered 'postsocialist', see Latham 2002.

[10] See Oi and Walder 1999. Ho (2001) argues that the current ambiguity in property relations is deliberate and serves state interests. See also Flower and Leonard 2002 and Pieke 2002.

tion, if only because the structure of landholding in the two halves of Germany was already rather different before 1945. The differences that developed after 1960 were shaped not only by collectivisation and socialist ideology, which suspended the land market, but also by numerous external factors, notably the substantial benefits that accrued to farmers in the west thanks to the agricultural subsidies of the Common Market (later the EU). Notwithstanding these differences, there were also countless similarities. In both Germanys, as elsewhere in Europe, the proportion of the population employed in agriculture declined sharply after 1945 as many people left the countryside to take up industrial employment in the towns.

The changes that have taken place in the 'new states' (*neue Bundesländer*) since unification in 1990 have been driven largely by the need to adapt to the western German system, but there remain interesting divergences. With the exception of large holdings appropriated by the Land Reform of 1945, the property rights of previous owners in eastern Germany were reaffirmed after unification, so that in terms of ownership the map now looks more fragmented there than in most parts of the west. New family farmers were given start-up grants, more favourable access to credit, and other subsidies (Koester and Brooks 1997). In spite of these policies, most land is still farmed by very large organisations, cooperatives as well as private limited companies. The availability of EU subsidies has enabled the successors to the old cooperative farms to adjust more effectively to new economic conditions than their equivalents in other postsocialist countries have been able to do. Although these successors were obliged to reduce their labour forces initially, studies have shown that, although productivity per hectare in the east tends to compare unfavourably with levels reached in the west, productivity per worker is more favourable in the east, regardless of the legal form of the enterprise (Fiege and Hinners-Tobrägel 2002: 28; cf. Schweizer 2002). The eastern German experience of rapid adjustment to the legal and economic structures of an advanced capitalist economy suggests that the 'industrial' models of socialist agriculture were not as inherently inefficient as is usually supposed. At least in some sectors, the benefits of scale economies may exceed the reduced 'transaction costs' associated with smaller, family-managed farms, which tend to tie up expensive capital equipment on holdings that are too small to allow for optimal utilisation.

Poland

Regrettably, we have had no project on Poland, where mass collectivisation was abandoned after a political crisis in 1956 and private family farming remained dominant. This is precisely what makes the Polish case so interesting. It is in many ways diametrically opposed to East Germany, not least in

terms of labour productivity. Agriculture's contribution to GDP in Poland fell steeply in the course of the 1990s, to reach 3.7% by 2000. Yet the proportion of the active population engaged in agriculture rose during the same period, from 25% to 28%. This figure is extraordinarily high in comparison with all neighbouring countries. It reflects the non-collectivised state's failure to provide alternative mechanisms to facilitate the consolidation of plots and enable more people to exit from farming and from rural residence.[11] Under Edward Gierek in the 1970s, the government gave limited support to so-called specialist farmers in the private sector; the results were unimpressive in economic terms, and they evoked political resistance, which continued in the Solidarity era. The countryside suffered sharply under the experience of the 'shock therapy' introduced in 1990 by Leszek Balcerowicz. Class conflict increased, the price scissors widened dramatically, and many regions, particularly where state farms were privatised, experienced high unemployment and severe poverty. Political protest was more vigorous in Poland than in any other postsocialist country, but it remained largely ineffective.[12]

Statistics must of course be treated with caution. Approximately half of the farming enterprises recognised in Polish national statistics produce nothing at all for the market, and perhaps their operators should not be classified as farmers at all. The agricultural economist Wojciech Ziętara (2002: 366–68) has noted polarising tendencies in the postsocialist years. During the 1990s, the proportion of land farmed by enterprises of more than 15 hectares rose to almost half the total agricultural land surface, a trend welcomed by Ziętara, who suggests that the problems of part-time farmers producing primarily for their own subsistence should be addressed by social policy, rather than by agricultural policy. But in 2000, 36.5% of Poland's agricultural surface was still cultivated on private farms no larger than 10 hectares. This is absurdly small in the context of modern agribusiness, and it is therefore not surprising that Poland's agrarian problem has posed a major obstacle in negotiations over the country's entry to the European Union. Recognising that the large subsidies paid to western farmers (including since 1990 the former East Germans) will not be continued under EU membership,

[11] For anthropological studies, see Hann 1985 and Nagengast 1993. Yugoslavia, where collectivisation was similarly abandoned, is the most comparable case. One significant difference is that larger numbers of Yugoslavs were able to leave the countryside to work abroad.

[12] For anthropological studies of postsocialism in Poland, see Buchowski 1997; Buchowski, Conte, and Nagengast 2001; Pine 1998; Zbierski-Salameh 1999. See also Kaleta 2001 and the contributions to Kolarska-Bobińska, Rosner, and Wilkin 2001, especially the chapter by Augustyń Woś, who is critical of the current high rates of extraction of value from the agricultural sector.

many Polish farmers oppose joining. Elizabeth Dunn (2002) argues that the extension of EU standards to Polish agriculture, which has already begun, is leading to perverse results as farmers rediscover the informal or 'corrupted' marketing channels of the socialist years in order to circumvent regulation.

The Polish government's policy of supporting a process of polarisation is not dissimilar to the 'specialist' policies pursued in the 1970s, except that nowadays the land market is liberalised and the institutions of socialism have been replaced at the national level by a plethora of new regulating agencies. At the local level, the state-subsidised 'agricultural circles', which had provided machine services to private farmers in the socialist period, disintegrated quickly. New forms of cooperation have yet to emerge. One consequence of the failure to implement collectivisation in the Polish case is that the subjective disposition of Polish farmers seems more antagonistic to cooperation than is the case in countries obliged to accept some form of the Soviet model.[13]

Hungary

Hungarian agricultural development under socialism is often presented as a rare success story (Swain 1985). Hungary is an intermediate case in terms of economic development: when collectivisation was imposed there (the final push took place in 1959–61), the country was under-industrialised in comparison with East Germany or the Czech Republic but advanced in comparison with its Soviet and south-eastern European neighbours. The compromise or social contract that developed there under the benign dictatorship of János Kádár depended heavily on a symbiosis of large-scale and small-scale sectors in agriculture. The introduction of the New Economic Mechanism in 1968 gave collective farm managers considerable autonomy and stimulated small-scale commodity production. In some areas of the country, including the region of my own fieldwork (Hann 1980), pragmatic adaptations to local ecological conditions modified socialist principles to allow exceptional levels of continuity with traditional patterns of family farming. In these years, more than half the total Hungarian population (including many city dwellers) had access to garden plots, and small-scale farming made a major contribution to overcoming rural poverty (Hann and Sárkány, chapter 4).

I found in Hungary that it was unnecessary to have access to agricultural land at all, let alone to own it, in order to be an active player in the

[13] It seems implausible that causality flows the other way, since cooperatives had a strong tradition in many parts of Poland in the pre-socialist period. It may be noted that there is also a marked reluctance in some former collectivised countries to form the sorts of 'new cooperatives' and 'producers' groups' favoured by the EU (Nigel Swain, personal communication, 2002).

agrarian 'second economy'. Household members could purchase sacks of fodder from the collective institution and push them home with their bicycles to the yards where they kept their pigs. When orthodox Marxist-Leninists in the Hungarian party became concerned about the rapid expansion of rural incomes in comparison with urban ones in the early 1970s, they implemented measures to reduce the profitability of this 'peasant' activity. Villagers responded by cutting back production. The unwanted social consequences of this cut-back, in combination with articulate interest-group representation by the agrarian lobby, led to a swift change in central policies and a restoration of the previous levels of incentives (Swain 1981: 244–47). This exemplifies the 'market socialist' character of the Hungarian reforms and marks a significant contrast with Poland and East Germany. Synergies between households and the large-scale socialist institutions continued during the more difficult economic climate of the 1980s. Further creative decentralisation measures helped to sustain the relative prosperity of the rural sector, though Imre Kovách (1999) has argued that stagnating production levels were due at least in part to an ideological unwillingness to allow the accumulation of private capital in agriculture. Ironically, agricultural output and exports reached all-time records in the late 1980s, just before Kádár retired and his party gave up its hold on power.

Under Hungarian market socialism, the numbers of people living in the countryside and working primarily in agriculture declined steadily. The proportion remained higher than in most western European countries, but the fall was rapid in comparison with non-collectivised Poland. In small, compact Hungary, many villagers were able to commute to their new industrial jobs, joining other members of their households in small-scale farming in their spare time. At the same time, socialist enterprises provided regular incomes for even the poorest, least skilled groups. This was extremely important in a country in which a high proportion of the rural population, particularly descendants of the former manorial labourers, had no experience of landownership and independent household farming. Social security and other entitlements improved steadily for all groups.

In the postsocialist period, agricultural output and rural employment have both fallen sharply in Hungary. As in Poland, the elimination of state farms has been accompanied by systematic attacks on the cooperatives that survived the turmoil of the early 1990s. The Independent Smallholders' Party participated in two governments but was unable to attain its goal of handing the land back to its previous owners. Instead, Hungary adopted complex compensation legislation that avoided the complete fragmentation of cooperative and state farm holdings while facilitating the emergence of a competitive private sector. The conservative government that held office

between 1998 and 2002 drew up plans to stimulate a dynamic entrepreneurial class of 5,000 to 10,000 capitalised family farmers ahead of EU accession—but this endorsement was made cautiously, almost sotto voce, so as not to forfeit the votes of the majority of villagers who stood to lose from this strategy. Critics pointed out that, if implemented, these plans would leave most Hungarian villages with just two or three entrepreneurs farming virtually all the land. Villagers themselves ask, What will become of the rest of us, those who have lost their jobs in industry or in the mostly defunct socialist farming organisations? Some fear a return to the rural-urban gulf that characterised Hungary in the pre-socialist years. The main difference is that in the 1930s, pre-industrial techniques meant that the labour of a large rural proletariat was still needed at harvest time and other seasonal peaks, whereas under postsocialist conditions, industrial, mechanised techniques, first disseminated under socialism, threaten to render a new rural underclass fully 'surplus to requirements'.

Bulgaria

Bulgaria provides a further relatively positive example of rural development under socialism. Collective farms (together with a much smaller state farm sector) had replaced private smallholdings throughout the country by 1960. Title was initially left with the previous owners, but in 1965 the ownership of land was constitutionally transferred to the collective institution (Wädekin 1982: 83). Villagers continued to identify with their cooperatives, even after these were subsumed into gigantic 'agro-industrial complexes' (some of these mergers were revoked in the later socialist period). During these years, rural households enjoyed increasing scope to accumulate wealth through the production of labour-intensive goods on personal plots, not only for their own consumption but also for sale on the market and to state procurement agencies through production contracts. Villagers remained politically and ideologically marginalized, and a significant proportion of their output was channelled informally to the cities to support urban relatives. But some of the new wealth was spent in the villages, and rural living standards benefited not only from state investment in infrastructure but also from the creation of non-agricultural jobs in small-scale industry (Creed 1995, 1998).

As in Hungary, the symbiosis collapsed quickly after 1989. Both production and living standards in the countryside fell sharply. The principal difference is that Bulgaria liquidated socialist agricultural institutions more thoroughly and restituted fields in their 'old real boundaries' to the pre-socialist owners. In some areas, such as the mountain region studied by Barbara Cellarius (chapter 7), villagers had little choice but to commence independent farming. In more productive areas, where the costs of abandon-

ing large-scale farming would have been substantial, the large-scale institutions had to compete with new entrepreneurs in order to rent land. Deema Kaneff (1996, 2000) has shown that many villagers remained loyal to their cooperative farm, especially if it continued to provide other services and was seen in some sense to embody the identity of the community.

The full restitution of the 1940s pattern of smallholding inhibited the consolidation of land markets and, in comparison with the Hungarian case, probably accentuated the difficulties facing new private farmers and made the continued domination of large-scale institutions more, rather than less, likely (Meurs 2001). Compared with managers in most other countries of the region, the former managers of large-scale socialist farms in Bulgaria have been less conspicuous among the new agrarian entrepreneurs, and many have left agriculture altogether. Nigel Swain (2000b: 27) has suggested that 'cooperative traditions in Bulgarian villages, which have a long pedigree, were just too strong for it to be acceptable for a handful of people to take over a farm that previously employed hundreds'.[14]

In chapter 7, Cellarius also explores the significance of cooperative traditions from the pre-socialist period for forestry cooperatives. Forests were nationalised under socialism, but the same policy of restitution to original owners is being implemented a decade after the restitution of agricultural land. The Bulgarian state is even more active in implementing the new property system in the case of forests.

The severe economic dislocation experienced by postsocialist Bulgaria has forced many rural households back into heavy dependence on subsistence production. The villagers studied by Cellarius disposed of a significant proportion of their potatoes to middlemen through barter, because the cash economy had broken down. The disintegration of the old system made many urban families even more dependent on rural kin and a range of informal strategies to obtain the foodstuffs they needed (Cellarius 2000; see also Chevalier 2001; Giordano, Kostova, and Lehmann-Minka 2000). Similar patterns can be documented in most postsocialist countries. Compared with the situation in Hungary, one important difference seems to be that more Bulgarian villagers have remained loyal to the successors to the socialist party (Creed 1995). Their 'subjective' evaluation of the accomplishments of the socialist years reflects the real progress made at that time. In Hungary, by contrast, the beneficiaries of rural development policies have by and large proved ungrateful and have not rewarded the revamped socialist party with their votes.

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[14] Gerald Creed (personal communication, 2002) attributes this to the damaging effects of collective farm liquidation in the early 1990s, after which 'there was not much left for the managers to build upon, so why would they even try if they could do anything else?'

From Property Rights to Property Relations

We have privileged property in this first cycle of MPISA projects because the legally sanctioned ways in which people hold 'things' and relate to each other in respect of those things are central to the functioning of every social system. In this section I want to show why it is necessary to expand our concept of property beyond the new legal codes designed to strengthen private, exclusive rights and to embrace instead a wider field of public claims and entitlements. Adapting the 'layered' model developed by the legal anthropologists Franz and Keebet von Benda-Beckmann, I then argue in the following section that this more comprehensive view of property relations sheds new light on socialism itself, as well as its aftermath.

The standard anthropological starting point for investigations of property is to view property as a 'bundle of rights' over things. Anthropologists focus on the various groups of people and organisations that hold these rights, but the characteristics of the 'thing' itself are also important, as numerous chapters in this volume make clear. For example, in comparison with agricultural land, forests posed a more serious challenge to the privatising Bulgarian state, a challenge that it took the state a full decade to address (Cellarius, chapter 7). The constraints set by the Siberian tundra and the reindeer that graze on it (Stammler and Ventsel, chapter 11) are different again. China's devolution of production to households succeeded, thanks to the intensified application of labour, in bringing impressive economic gains in rice production, but the same measures brought inefficiencies and environmental degradation to the pastoral 'sociotechnical system' of Inner Mongolia (Sneath 2000, n.d.).

Agricultural land highlights the inadequacies of simple models of ownership that privilege either individualism or communalism. It seems likely that Eurasian systems of farming have always been based on a mix of collective and individual property rights. This remains the case even after the strengthening of private ownership in some regions in recent centuries. Max Gluckman (1965) approached the central issues of land tenure by distinguishing between 'estates of production' and 'estates of administration'. The latter concept refers to the hierarchy of authorities with rights over the resource in question, from the local kin or residential group up to the (paramount) chief or king. This model, which Gluckman applied to African tribal societies, was adapted by Caroline Humphrey in her analysis of a Soviet collective farm (Humphrey 1998; see also Ziker, chapter 12). In modern capitalist states, 'full ownership' usually refers to exclusive legal title, including rights to use, to dispose of, and to alienate the land. These rights are

never absolute but subject to a legal frame backed up by the state.[15] Rights to use and to manage are often exercised by parties other than the legal owners. The power to control, or simply the power of *access,* is of greater practical significance than legal ownership.[16]

Yet as we have seen, both Marxism and neo-liberalism attach considerable importance to principles of ownership. What I term the standard liberal model derives ultimately from the emergence of a distinction between rights in things and rights in people in ancient Roman law (Gluckman 1965: 94, following Henry Maine; cf. Mauss 1990 [1923–24]: 61). In the liberal tradition, exclusive private ownership provides the basis for efficiency (as well as political liberty and other virtues that do not directly concern us here) by creating the optimum structure of incentives. Alongside anticipated material benefits, such as the maximisation of income streams, it seems likely that psychological and emotional factors also play an important role in explaining people's attachments to things and the ways in which they transmit them (Schlicht 1998). An egalitarian distribution of land to private owners was the principal aspiration of populist emancipatory movements in most parts of eastern Europe in pre-socialist years. Although 'populism' is more commonly used nowadays as a term of abuse, such movements illustrate the wide appeal of the standard liberal model. Though land reform programmes have seldom achieved anything approaching the advantages claimed for them, similar programmes have been widely recommended to the Third World by agencies such as the World Bank. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, the assumption remains that owner-operated farms and efficient land markets are the structures necessary for investment, growth, access to credit, and long-term social security.[17]

The critical anthropologist will ask at least three basic empirical questions of the proponents of the standard liberal model. First, assuming that these liberal principles are expressed in legal codes, are these private property rights actually enforced? Second, is implementation (or perhaps lack of implementation) in fact consistent with the maximisation of economic efficiency? Third, is this the sole objective that people themselves envisage when they reflect upon their arrangements for holding and transmitting property objects?

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[15] For example, many Welsh farmers lost their privately owned fields when the British state appropriated their land to build the new town in which I was raised. The state paid compensation, but only according to the fields' market value as agricultural land.

[16] This is by no means a peculiarity of the agrarian sector. See Rifkin 2000 for further discussion of the present nature and the future of capitalist property relations.

[17] For an account of how the World Bank itself has come to modify the implementation of standard liberal principles in the rural sector, see Deininger and Binswanger 2001; see also Tadesse, chapter 15.

In the standard Marxist counter-model, private ownership of the means of production is the source of exploitation and must therefore be replaced by new, collective forms of property. Stalinist collectivisation implemented this dogma in the rural sector. As with neo-liberalism, the critical anthropologist may find the ideal type useful but will want to ask searching empirical questions. First, there is the same question of implementation: are the new principles, as enunciated in laws or in statements of Communist Party ideology, in fact implemented? Second, is their enforcement, or the lack of it, consistent with proclaimed goals of social equity and central planning for economic efficiency? Third—to repeat the question asked of the liberal model—are these the objectives that people themselves envisage when they reflect upon their arrangements for holding and transmitting property objects?

These questions suggest the limitations of approaching property solely in terms of links between persons and things and with a focus on property *rights*. Anthropologists supplement the accounts of lawyers and economists by calling for a more expansive notion of property in terms of *relations* between persons, of their claims and entitlements as members of communities (Hann 1998; Verdery n.d.). A comprehensive anthropological framework for this expanded understanding of property has been outlined by Franz and Keebet von Benda-Beckmann (1999). They are critical of mainstream legal and economic theory, which tends to overlook the full range of rights and duties and to exaggerate the extent to which modern private ownership is itself free of legal and cultural restraints. Their analytic model identifies four 'layers' of social organisation: ideology and culture; legal regulation (often plural); property as multifunctional relationships; and finally, property practices, where these analytically separable layers come together in complex ways.

Legislative changes in property rights form part of the second layer; they may or may not be especially revealing and must in any case be assessed in the wider context. For example, the civil code adopted early on by the Bolsheviks was very similar to the German code of the time, but this similarity gives minimal insight into the property realities of the succeeding generations of socialist rule. To understand these realities, it is important to appreciate how power was exercised from above in the system euphemistically known as 'democratic-centralism', including the contestation of that power. Where the two did not coincide, the force of socialist ideology might be expected to undercut the provisions of the formal legal code. Each of these might in turn be modified in the light of pervasive cultural understandings of who should own and control what—for example, a tradition of making land available to all members of a rural community. The effect of these

potentially conflicting norms and property rules can then be assessed at the layer of actual social relationships (e.g., between workers and managers on a state farm) and with reference to particular property practices (e.g., changes in the treatment of personal plots). Clearly, many of these elements feed directly into one another. The 'functional' model of the von Benda-Beckmanns is wider in scope than that of Gluckman; like the earlier model, it can be fruitfully applied to a wide range of property systems.

Property Relations under Socialism and Postsocialism

The advantages of such an expanded approach to property relations are well illustrated in processes of collectivisation and decollectivisation. When farmers in the socialist states were coerced into joining new collective farms and making their land, tools, and animals available to the collective, they clearly experienced a violation of their property rights, regardless of whether or not their names remained formally on record in a land registry as owners. Subjectively, that experience was often so devastating that, generations later, they, their children, and their grandchildren can see only the diminution of their rights, their loss of autonomy, the flagrant breaches of the law. But the wider perspective adopted here obliges us to take seriously the possibility that the new forms of collective property generated new claims and entitlements—for example, to a guaranteed job, to a pension, to cheap health care. Because these new forms of empowerment were not, or at any rate not consistently, implemented through the legal system, Katherine Verdery (n.d.) speaks of an 'administrative property regime' under socialism, rather than a juridical one. She insists, however, that it is a mistake to dismiss socialism as a 'property vacuum'. It is important to expand the notion of property system in this way, because the return to a juridical system has provoked many rural dwellers to realise what they are now losing, not through coercive appropriation of their 'things' but through the insidious undermining of their entitlements. It follows that an understanding of all the layers of the socialist property system, in both their 'objective' and their 'subjective' dimensions, is essential for an understanding of postsocialist developments.

Under the terms of the socialist synthesis described earlier, ownership of the means of production was determined by legislation and administrative decrees imposed by communist parties and legitimated in terms of socialist ideology. In all the countries where collectivisation was implemented, individuals were hindered from exercising effective property rights over land and larger machines. Yet at least in cases such as the Hungarian and Bulgarian, it seems that people did not need the incentives of owning such items in order to respond elastically to market mechanisms. Socialist ideology

squeezed the role played by privately owned property in production, but as Eidson and Milligan show in chapter 2 for East Germany, entrepreneurial elements could be of considerable importance within cooperative farms. Outside the socialist organisations, the fact that private property remained dominant in the sphere of consumption provided the major incentive for intensive activity in the 'second economy'. There were significant differences in this regard between town and countryside. Whereas relatively few urban citizens under socialism owned the apartments in which they lived, the housing stock in the countryside remained for the most part in private hands and could be transferred by sale as well as through inheritance. In the course of the socialist period, the value of the consumer goods owned by individuals rose substantially (e.g., with the spread of privately owned cars), a trend in accordance with Western capitalist trends. These new property objects became the basis for negotiating prestige. Whereas in the pre-socialist village, ownership of land and of the animals and machines necessary to farm it were decisive for one's social standing, under socialism these property objects lost their significance. Given generally bleak prospects for agriculture under postsocialism, it is not surprising that mundane but secure wage-labour jobs remain more attractive to most people than a large landholding. Only an elderly minority is thankful for restitution, for sentimental reasons (Cartwright, chapter 6; Hann and Sárkány, chapter 4).

In terms of production, the creation or restitution of private ownership rights has not, on the whole, been conducive to the formation of efficient units. The redistribution of rights has tended to undermine the successes of the mature socialist period, and cooperatives have experienced discrimination in some countries. Many of those who now own land no longer live in the countryside at all (some may no longer even live in the country), and the costs of administering the new rental contracts are evidently high, even for those owners who still live locally. In short, new social conflicts are developing, and the economic consequences of the new ownership structure are negative. Thoroughgoing privatisation might prove beneficial in a world in which such problems could be speedily resolved through the working of the land market and efficient, non-corrupt bureaucracies. But to insist on the theoretical virtues of 'property rights' approaches in the postsocialist world is, to say the least, unrealistic.

Adapting the von Benda-Beckmanns' metaphor, the following picture emerges. At the layer of institutional regulation and legislation, property law follows the prevailing ideology of the state, and the end of socialism was marked by an apparently dramatic transformation. Even where substantial continuity in production prevailed, as in some parts of East Germany, cooperative farms had to be re-formed on a private law basis. Theoretically, 'law'

has now been elevated to frame the entire system, in place of the old frame, Marxist-Leninist ideology.[18] But the studies in this volume show that the implementation of new legal codes is also a matter of power and informal understandings and that the new ideology of market and private property is necessarily modified by older socio-cultural norms, which now include a layer of sedimentation from the socialist past.

At the layer of social relations, changes have been considerable but less dramatic. Andrew Cartwright (chapter 6), writing about Romania, documents new tensions between the generations (cf. Thelen n.d., who highlights the dimension of gender). Throughout the decollectivising countries, to the extent that managers of former collective farms have been able to convert their political capital into other forms of capital, they have retained the most desirable positions. In some cases, however (Miller and Heady, chapter 9), the continued popularity of a leader seems directly related to his or her commitment to serving the community and maintaining a traditional moral economy.

Finally, at the layer of practices, it is possible to observe many similarities between capitalism, socialism, and postsocialism. This is the layer at which behaviour motivated by individual utility maximisation is most visible; the most obvious example is people's propensity to accumulate private consumer goods, but the propensity to expend more effort on productive resources that one controls exclusively is another unifying characteristic, at least wherever the household plot was part of socialist institutions. Yet the layer of practices may also show us people's determined efforts in all periods to transcend *Homo economicus:* they seek to prevent some especially valued goods, possibly including the land itself, from becoming fully commoditised. They try to maintain habits of cooperation and to bind others through ties of kinship, giving, and reciprocity (Brandtstädter, chapter 14; Yalçın-Heckmann 2001; Ziker, chapter 12).

Although this 'layered' approach to property suggests that some of the contrasts conventionally drawn between capitalism and socialism are exaggerated, their differences may still be significant. One key question is the extent to which socialist values dominate at layer one. Is socialism seen as compatible with previous ideologies or central cultural ideas, or as an outgrowth from them? The evidence of decollectivisation seems to indicate that, in some eastern European countries, as in China, values linked to the collective, to an ethos of cooperation and equality, are weaker than is the case in most parts of Russia. This might be attributed to the fact that the Russian

[18] In some cases it is instructive to examine carefully the details of the legal forms of new organisations; see the chapters in this volume by Eidson and Milligan, Hann and Sárkány, Stammler and Ventsel, and Ziker.

experience of socialist institutions was longer than that of most other countries, but collectivist norms in the country's pre-socialist traditions must also be taken into account (Heady n.d.; Miller and Heady, chapter 9; cf. Nolan 1995).

Other influences are also important. In particular, the significance of material and environmental factors must be recognised. Francesca Bray (1986) has argued persuasively for strong links between wet rice production and entrepreneurial initiative in the Chinese context. The tenurial demands of dry grain farming (the Eurasian agrarian norm) also differ from those required for efficient access to resources by Central Asian pastoralists (Humphrey and Sneath 1999). But although differences of ecology and resource type may help us to establish comparative typologies, the particular histories of places always point up limitations. Wheat farmers by the Elbe in East Germany are, in some significant respects, quite different from wheat farmers by the Danube in Bulgaria, let alone those by the Volga in Russia. With this apparently banal insight, we can turn to consider an influential body of theory known as the 'new institutional economics', which emphasises the 'path dependency' of economic development and which holds cautionary implications for those who imagined that postsocialist transformation could be speedily engineered from above by changing the basis of property rights.

The new institutionalists are a broad church. Although leading figures emphasise the centrality of property in shaping economic activity (North 1990), they tend to restrict their analyses to the legal 'layer'. Some institutionalists do, however, recognise that the effects of legal changes in property rules depend not only on economic factors (such as the extent to which effective markets have been consolidated) but also on local perceptions of morality and the informal rules of the community, as only an anthropologist can uncover them (Finke 2000). Numerous scholars have applied new institutionalist theory to explain the successes and failures of postsocialist transformation, apparently a 'system change' with few parallels in world economic history. A close consideration of the work of Mieke Meurs (1999, 2001) on processes of decollectivisation highlights both affinities and contrasts with the anthropological approaches developed here and leads us to issues of practical application and policy.

Economics, Anthropology, and Policy

Mieke Meurs has argued over many years for a more realistic assessment of conditions in the eastern European countryside. She rejects the 'nirvana' approach preferred by some of her economist colleagues, which assumes perfect information and the presence of developed, well-functioning mar-

kets. In her detailed comparison of Hungary and Bulgaria (2001), she shows that the course taken by the latter, which aimed to restore land as private property to its previous owners, paradoxically left large-scale institutions in a stronger position than they occupied in Hungary. Hungarian decollectivisation, following the principle of compensation rather than restitution, allowed for the more rapid consolidation of land markets and thereby a stronger private property regime. Meurs recognises that successor institutions to the socialist cooperatives can offer attractive, 'rational' solutions to many households that now own land but are not in a position to farm it privately. At the same time, she argues that government policy can actively improve the situation, both by facilitating the emergence of private farmers as 'new entrants' and by ensuring more democratic governance of the postsocialist cooperatives. The aim of the latter measure would be to improve efficiency and thereby give a better deal to cooperative members and others from whom the large institutions lease land.

The analytic model developed by Meurs (2001: chap. 2) has three dimensions: production costs, transaction costs, and social costs. The realm of production costs might seem to be the exclusive preserve of the economist. Here Meurs is able to show, for example, that economies of scale vary in different branches of agriculture, a circumstance that bears directly on the likelihood of new entrepreneurs emerging to challenge the cooperatives. The anthropologist will point out that the most important production input in family farming is still the labour of the household, where the classic Chayanovian theses concerning 'self-exploitation' are as valid as ever. Anthropologists can contribute to a more informed understanding of how decisions to work are taken by the household and how the burden is then distributed among household members. For example, increased output in many parts of post-reform China is dependent on intensified exploitation of the labour of female household members. Even in this dimension, then, there is a need at the sub-household level for the anthropologist to complement the analysis of the economist.

'Transaction costs' is the umbrella term favoured by new institutionalists to capture the multiple real-world constraints on economic actors that arise from inadequate markets and imperfect information. Andrew Cartwright (2000, 2001) has given detailed accounts of how a kind of 'local law' frustrates the state's attempts to implement the new structure of landholding in Transylvania. In his contribution to this volume (chapter 6) he shows that problems such as those caused by inter-generational conflict cannot be resolved by current efforts to improve the working of the land market. The transaction costs facing a would-be agricultural entrepreneur in a postsocialist village are likely to be higher than those facing the managers of a succes-

sor cooperative, because the latter can draw on their well-established networks ('social capital') to secure necessary inputs and facilitate marketing (Lampland 2002). As this example immediately suggests, transaction costs are intimately related to the social relationships of the community, and so the need for anthropological expertise in this domain is obvious.

Meurs recognises that the addition of this catchall category of transaction costs is still insufficient to explain household decision taking. Behaviour is also shaped by social norms, and would-be entrepreneurs may be deterred from setting up their private farms if the social costs of doing so are high. Meurs argues plausibly that a long history of more collectivist norms in Bulgaria, evident in the nature of cooperative institutions even before the impact of socialism, helps us to understand the different track followed by decollectivisation there, in comparison with Hungary. But even when the aggregate statistics are supplemented by micro-level econometric studies of farm productivity and the occasional case study, the economist does not find it easy to model this dimension. If 'transaction costs' are a catchall, then 'social norms' are an ultimate residual, invoked to save the premise of rationality when all else fails. In any case, Meurs herself makes little use of this dimension: the main patterns established in her research are determined by the development of markets and transaction costs. Thus, in the Hungarian case, the decisive factor is the faster consolidation of effective land markets and genuine competition between the private sector and the postsocialist cooperatives. If some villagers still prefer to rent their land to a cooperative, this is not due to adherence to a norm but is likely to have a straightforward economic justification.

Is such an approach adequate for understanding the norms and values of a community and their impact on economic action? I visited Hungary regularly during the years of Meurs's study and found several quite different clusters of norms and values in the village of Tázlár. Many villagers were engaged in a continuous struggle to make ends meet, in circumstances that had become precarious compared with those of the socialist period. The patterns Meurs identified were a consequence of political and economic forces that were consistent with the values of some persons in the community but breached those of others. In the case of Tázlár, a small group of activist members of the Independent Smallholders' Party helped to ensure the complete withdrawal of the socialist cooperative from agricultural production and the handover of all land to the private sector (Hann and Sárkány, chapter 4). They were apparently motivated by strong anti-collectivist values. Within a few years, however, the most articulate of these activists was bemoaning the lack of economic coordination among farmers and of an institutional forum in the community that would allow them to represent and

promote their interests. Yet I could not ascertain that this man's values had changed in any way during the intervening period.

Where the economist separates out these three dimensions of cost, the anthropologist is more likely to emphasise the links between them. Perceptions of work and norms of moral behaviour in a community are shaped and reshaped in the unfolding of social relationships. If the dimension of social norms is to be taken seriously, then Meurs surely should consider the possibility that the evolved norms of the community contradict her premise of 'individual maximizing by households'. For example, a 'solidarity' value might lead villagers to prefer to hold onto a cooperative, even though it can never enforce incentives as well as a private-sector competitor. Meurs excludes such considerations, but the insights of the 'common property' theorists are pertinent if we really want to understand the behaviour, interests, and aspirations of the actors. The institutionalist extensions of transaction costs and social norms should lead to a more radical questioning of rational-choice approaches based on individual or household. Transaction costs and social costs are more than constraints on the behaviour of individuals and households; both are the continuously evolving outcomes of social interaction and at the same time the stuff of the moral economy.

Few economic anthropologists would dispute that rational utility maximising, subject to constraints, provides a useful guide to a good deal of individual and household behaviour. But economists themselves have recently amassed considerable experimental evidence to cast doubt on the axioms of *Homo economicus*. The complementary anthropological critique draws on data from everyday life, not the laboratory. The contributors to this volume challenge Meurs's assumption that the maximisation of individual returns is a *sufficient* basis for understanding actors' behaviour in the real social worlds of postsocialism. Some people attach positive values to institutions such as their collective farm and negative values to the wealth disparities that seem almost everywhere to accompany the development of markets and private property.

In the Maussian account (Mauss 1990 [1923–4]), humanity's great transformation takes place when self-interested behaviour is disentangled from the socially prescribed and given ethical justification. Susanne Brandtstädter finds this dichotomy unhelpful in the Chinese case she examines in chapter 14. The inhabitants of one of China's most developed regions manage, through their exchanges, to transcend such individualism. Collectivist ideas seem even more firmly entrenched in rural Russia, including remote regions of Siberia such as that examined by John Ziker in chapter 12. There, kinship entitlements and the 'law of the tundra' work to preserve some kind

of moral community.[19] Elsewhere in Siberia, such as Kamchatka, assessed in this volume by Alexander King (chapter 13), decollectivisation seems to have had more corrosive effects. It has intensified the propensity to maximise only a selfish, individualist or family-centred 'utility function', in which theft is now a readily available option. These and other chapters describe how collectivist and individualist norms can exist side-by-side, and some authors, notably Brandtstädter, explicitly challenge the usefulness of this dichotomy.

Meurs herself draws conclusions that differ from those of ideological propagators of markets and private property, whom she compares, appropriately, to the more dogmatic proponents of collectivisation under socialism. Arguing against a 'one size fits all' approach, she suggests that policy be adapted to local conditions. There should be a level playing field for alternative organisational forms. For example, it may be sensible to leave cooperatives to dominate production in regions where economies of scale are considerable and it is unrealistic to expect competition from the private sector. In other regions, it would be eminently sensible to encourage private entrepreneurs in the production of more labour-intensive crops.

This policy advice is reasonable as far as it goes, but Meurs excludes the possibility that it might be desirable to sustain and even strengthen cooperative relationships for their own sake, not merely to redress market shortcomings but to maximise the welfare of the community within its overarching, long-term moral economy. She sees no grounds for intervention to protect community organisations in situations where market conditions are conducive to private initiative. She applauds Hungary's 'vibrant private sector', the rapid expansion of which has broken the power of social norms to determine farming outcomes. But when she poses the question, 'Does the outcome matter?' (Meurs 2001: 109–12), she does not consider the consequences of setting up a sharp disjuncture between the new organisational structure of farming and the community's norms and values. In short, she remains wedded to the methodological individualism that underpins liberal economics, and this limits the value of her policy recommendations. Meurs's work, despite its pragmatic merits when compared with the arguments of the 'free market fundamentalists', illustrates why the work of the new institutionalists has failed to fulfil early hopes that it would forge better links between anthropology and economics (see Acheson, ed., 1994).

[19] Of course, collectivisation could also be disruptive of traditional moralities and cultural identities. Brian Donahoe (2002) has shown how the imposition of collectivist Soviet institutions promoted sedentarisation and a stronger sense of exclusive property rights among the Tofa, a group long exposed to Russian influence, which has hindered them from resuming reindeer herding and led to conflicts over land under postsocialist conditions.

What, then, in comparison, is the policy relevance of the anthropological research projects described in this volume? Do these case studies shed more general light on what has happened in wider regions or countries? Might some anthropological advice have been useful *ex ante?* Anthropologists familiar with the literature on rural societies before, during, and after the imposition of collectivisation could have warned that any break-up of socialist farms would lead to problems, that attempts to re-establish previous patterns of ownership would lead to economic inefficiencies, at least in the short term, and that rural living standards would probably fall in comparison with those of urban areas. Many others, including agrarian economists and sociologists, could and did provide advice of this kind. If, on the other hand, we take the anthropologist's specific contribution to be that of providing better access to and insight into the views of local people themselves, then the assignment is more complex. In some places the anthropologist would report that people showed little or no interest in dismantling the collective farms and felt considerable apprehension about what might replace them. In others, she or he would find that mainstream opinion strongly favoured immediate dissolution and the restitution of pre-socialist property relations, viewed as a moral imperative. In some places opinions might be evenly balanced; there might well be cases in which the anthropologist would conclude that the dominant voices, as expressed in public meetings by the most respected male members of the community, were not supported in private by their wives or children.

This emphasis on local conditions would seem to confirm the widely held view that policymakers, who have to draw up general rules, can expect little help from anthropologists. But just as an implicit extension of the generalising logic of a market principle lies hidden behind Meurs's concern with the details of local circumstances, so is it possible to identify, behind the anthropologist's concern with specific clusters of norms and values in highly diverse communities, a unifying, alternative general principle of policy advice. This basic principle is: do not deprive the rural population of institutions and organisations potentially capable of articulating and representing the moral economy. Even where collective farms were most repressive and most vigorously opposed, it may be difficult or impossible to create new organisations to serve the community once the old ones have been destroyed. The anthropologist may give strong support to Meurs's reformist plea for more accountability within the successors to the old producers' cooperatives and may, in many cases, supplement this with a call for a reduction in size, for making the organisations more congruent with residential communities. But the anthropologist may voice principled scepticism over the economist's endorsement of private entrepreneurial competition. If

the local community clearly favours the creation of new incentive systems allowing greater inequalities as a reward for greater effort, then such a view would have to be accepted and respected as an expression of the moral economy. Full congruence with neo-liberal prescriptions cannot be ruled out a priori—but it is not to be found in any of the case studies in this volume.[20] The key point is to understand and respect the views of local people and their capacity for self-organisation, rather than impose the standard liberal model or a lightly modified variant thereof.

A better understanding of normative diversity within rural communities might in itself have been beneficial in the crucial years when decollectivising policies were implemented. Even when it fails to result in clear blueprints for policy, qualitative research may play a useful role. Given the basic tenets of the postsocialist legal and constitutional order, as well as the often brutal manner in which collectivisation had been introduced, there was perhaps no alternative in the early 1990s to the adoption of programmes that prioritised family farms and private ownership and discriminated against cooperative and collective forms. But these policies could have been ameliorated at the time and corrected later on, when their negative results became increasingly apparent. The contributions to this volume show that the need for unbiased social scientific analysis of the condition of the countryside is as great now as it has ever been. We can—and we should—attempt to formulate policy advice, both on the basis of local analyses and in the spirit of the general principle I laid out in the preceding paragraph. Whether politicians and other decision takers pay heed is another matter.

Conclusion: The Rural Condition in Eurasia

Throughout Eurasia, tremendous variety obtained in the agrarian sector under socialism, and this remains the case under postsocialism. Particularly striking is the contrast between Russia, where in spite of legislative changes and many inducements, few have become private owners and entrepreneurs, and China, where the post-Mao reforms have encouraged entrepreneurial initiative on a massive scale, making possible high rates of growth, though without well-defined property rights. The more flexible eastern European variants of socialism had already relegated ownership issues to the margins. Bulgaria and Hungary both developed an accommodation between large-

[20] In certain circumstances 'the market' can itself become a kind of collective good—for example, in the case of the Hungarian villagers I studied in the 1970s, when rapid commoditisation of small-scale farming led quickly to much higher standards of living for most villagers. Compared with postsocialist agricultural markets, those of the 1970s (with the exception of a brief interlude described above) were valued above all for their stability, which was underwritten by the 'market socialist' state.

scale farms, the principal agents of modernisation in farming and in rural life more generally, and village households, which received incentives to maintain traditional, labour-intensive production strategies. Socialist models of this sort can be viewed as alternatives to classical models for the transformation of underdeveloped rural societies. They have had far-reaching implications for social structure, demographic trends, settlement patterns, and the quality of life in both town and countryside. The words for collective and cooperative were ideologically contaminated through the socialist experiences, and the restitution of landed property brought at least emotional redress to many. At the same time, many new owners are now critical of the privatisation policies and point to a decline in what I term their *inclusive* property rights, the public entitlements they had come to associate with citizenship. Some recognise the need for new forms of association to resolve their collective action problems, but at present this seems all too often to be unachievable.

I have argued that both liberals and socialists, in their contrasting ways, attach excessive importance to a particular narrow vision of property rights. Their simplifications, emphasising either private ownership or collective ownership, cannot do justice to the complex bundles of rights and obligations that actually prevail in all human societies. Even the most collectivist socialist systems did not disturb individual rights over many items of personal property, while even the most extreme neo-liberal regimes depend heavily on a set of conditions that can be maintained only by the state. More realistic approaches are needed, in which the investigation of property is not confined to 'private law' notions of ownership but opens up to include informal rules, community norms, and citizenship entitlements.

The agrarian question is concerned with the distinctive features of economy and society in the rural sector. In England, the enclosure movement exemplified the disruptive effects of capitalism on this sector. Its processes, later theorised in terms of 'disembedding' and the destruction of the moral economy, had considerable influence upon the original Marxist posing of the agrarian question. The Marxist solution, in the form of state and collective (cooperative) farms, can be most charitably interpreted as a re-embedding. The collective farm was a total social institution (Humphrey 1995), providing a wide range of social and welfare services to its members, alongside its economic and political functions. It was part of a hierarchically structured, encompassing system that by definition precluded the disembedding brought about by decentralised markets and competition. It did so by severing bonds between the land and individuals and families. Tragically, it turned out that this violation of property rights was, for many who experienced it, an even more brutal rupture.

The standard postsocialist prescription for the countryside is the same as that for other sectors: the means of production must now be privately owned, and market competition must prevail. Most collective farms have been split up, and even where some forms of cooperative persist, as in many parts of East Germany, the old *landwirtschaftsfremde* jobs—positions that had more to do with village social policy than with agricultural production—have been eliminated. Yet the continuities with rural life under socialism are strong. It is not that the requirements of the soil and the seasons impose their eternal constraints on villagers. Our ideal types of capitalism and socialism are especially misleading in this sector. In comparison with townspeople, villagers were 'preadapted' to postsocialism in the sense that collectivised villagers were accustomed to working their personal plots as household enterprises. They were the owners of their houses and sometimes of significant productive equipment as well. Some property practices associated with the 'total social institution' were new, but in other respects villagers' lived experiences under socialism made the transformation to markets and private property substantially less dramatic for them than it proved to be for most townspeople.

The contributors to this book show how, despite radical changes in ideology and legal regulations, people actively strive to hold onto the valued elements of the older moral economy. It is not just that they may still refer to the successor organisations by the old name *kolkhoz*. As Miller and Heady show (chapter 9), they continue to expect leaders to acknowledge the needs of a moral economy. As Alexander Nikulin (2002) has recently shown in a comparable case study, villagers are prone to justify high levels of pilfering in moral terms when sufficient resources are not flowing to them through the new economic channels of the 'holding company'.

A common response of economists to case studies such as these (apart from throwing up their hands in horror) is to insist that if only the model of the holding company can be upheld over that of the 'hacienda', if the logic of the market can be allowed to operate and entrepreneurs liberated from the tyranny of social norms, then eventually the 'transparent' benefits of the classical liberal model will begin to flow and the ex-kolkhoz members will give up their value-based expectations of management. But this response is naïve and flawed. First, capitalist labour relations also depend on complex bargains between workers and employers, and nowhere more so than in agrarian communities. This built-in element of embedding is recognised by some institutional economists as a product of 'custom', the practical or tacit negotiation that always accompanies the contractual specification of a wage (Schlicht 1998). Postsocialist transformation, even at its most radical, cannot destroy all the integuments of custom. If new multinational enterprises in the

cities encounter great difficulty in changing working habits (Dunn 1999), what should one expect in the village?

Second—and this, too, is a level of naivety that does not escape postsocialist villagers themselves—it is important to consider the real world context of agriculture in the most advanced Western countries, where 'the market' is so strongly modified by political and social factors that it bears virtually no resemblance to the model of Victorian laissez-faire. Large farms could survive in East Germany more easily than elsewhere only because of the high level of subsidies paid by the European Union. Like many states, the EU enforces a system of quotas to regulate production. It pays special subsidies in disadvantaged regions. Since 1999, in the context of an 'Integrated Program for Rural Development', the EU has increasingly approached agricultural planning in the context of more general strategies for rural development, including landscape maintenance, job creation, and subsidised housing schemes. Certainly the forces of market competition remain powerful, but they operate within a restricted economic sphere that is subject to continuous political redefinition as well as tight regulation. In other words, we are witnessing new forms of embedding in the west, and yet these are not acknowledged by those who, in the context of the postsocialist countries, insist that rural welfare policies be strictly separated from agrarian management. Market fundamentalists like to call for transparency, but it is not clear to the rural population in the postsocialist countries why they must give up some of the social supports which they enjoyed under socialism and which their counterparts in the west have come to take for granted in somewhat different forms. For many postsocialist citizens, markets have collapsed, and becoming the private owner of land is increasingly perceived to be a poor substitute for lost entitlements.

It is safe to conclude that the long and problematic relationship between the countryside and the market principle is undergoing further major changes, both west and east. Anthropologists long ago gave up studying the rural community as if it were a microcosm of a wider social system. The social solidarity of this community cannot be a proxy for the cohesion and integration of entire regions or countries. Anthropologists may, however, find it stimulating to view recent EU approaches to the special problems of the rural sector as a prelude to a more general reappraisal of the place of markets and private property in society and of their analogues in the social sciences. It is neither possible nor desirable to reject the central liberal institutions, any more than it is possible or desirable to dismiss methodological individualism. But both need to be put in their proper place, and more room needs to be made for discussion of other principles—social solidarity, moral justice, sustainable development, collective representations. The

demise of socialism has generally been accompanied by a reimposition of traditional urban domination. Yet the legacy of the socialist years, in terms of infrastructure, institutions, and values, cannot be eliminated and effortlessly replaced by a (largely illusory) blueprint of capitalised, family-owned farms. The neo-liberal models of transformation are as ideological as the socialist models they have replaced. In some countries these models can be made to resonate with populist traditions, including a strong attachment to private property in land. But even in these cases, villagers increasingly realise that, in more important ways, they are among the casualties of post-socialism and that the rural-urban divide, which narrowed under socialism, has again widened.

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Chapter 2
Cooperative Entrepreneurs? Collectivisation and Privatisation of Agriculture in Two East German Regions

John Eidson and Gordon Milligan

One of the surprising results of privatisation in the former Soviet bloc was the survival of the legal successors to the cooperative or collective farms of the socialist era. Especially with regard to East Germany, it was often assumed that family farms comparable to those in West Germany would re-emerge quickly once political barriers had been removed.[1] It is true that many family-based enterprises, including both single-operator farms and partnerships, have been founded in East Germany since 1990. But in 2001, more than 50 percent of all arable land in the new federal states was cultivated by cooperative or corporate farms, most of which were successors to the socialist cooperatives.[2]

In explaining the peculiarities of farm size and farm structure in East Germany today, researchers have referred to a number of factors, including the legal status of cooperatives before and after 1990, changing patterns of land tenure, generational discontinuities in farming families, the increasing capital intensity of agricultural production, and the social capital of socialist-

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[1] In this chapter, 'East Germany' refers to the territories that until 1990 belonged to the Deutsche Demokratische Republik (German Democratic Republic) and in 1990 became the neue Bundesländer (new federal states) of the Bundesrepublik Deutschland (Federal Republic of Germany). Correspondingly, 'West Germany' refers to the territories that made up the Federal Republic of Germany before 1990. Although they may be viewed as remnants of the vocabulary of the Cold War era, the terms 'Ostdeutschland' (East Germany) and 'Westdeutschland' (West Germany) are still widely used and readily understandable among contemporary Germans.

[2] See the report of the Bundesministerium für Verbraucherschutz (2002: Table 8). As Brauer, Ernst, and Willisch (1999: 1391) note, it is not always possible to deduce the historical origins of an agricultural enterprise from its legal form. It is well known, however, that most legal successors to the East German agricultural cooperatives fall into the category 'legal persons', which includes cooperatives and corporations of various types. This issue is addressed in the section of the chapter on privatisation.

era managers after the fall of the socialist regime (Brauer, Ernst, and Willisch 1999; Laschewski 1998, 2000; cf. Lampland 2002). The explanation involving social capital is of special interest, because it corresponds at least in part to popular criticism of so-called red barons, that is, former heads of socialist cooperatives who have succeeded in establishing themselves as managers of successor enterprises (*Der Spiegel* 1995, 1997). Although we are interested in the social bases of public opinion regarding the agrarian sector, our primary objective in this chapter is to build upon and supplement the social capital argument in a way that clearly distinguishes it from popular attacks on the 'red barons'. Rather than arguing that former socialist managers are hindering entrepreneurs, we argue that they themselves were and sometimes still are entrepreneurs, often with roots in 'middle peasant' families. In this way, we intend to contribute to old debates about 'socialist entrepreneurs' and to new debates about cooperative farm managers in the postsocialist era (Lampland 2002; Szelényi 1988: 2).

In a study published during the last years of Soviet influence in central and eastern Europe, Ivan Szelényi and his co-authors documented and analysed entrepreneurial activities and processes of 'embourgeoisement' in the Hungarian countryside (Szelényi 1988). In its general outlines, much of their argument applies to East Germany as well. There, too, rural entrepreneurship and assimilation to bourgeois forms of social and economic life may be viewed as long-term historical trends. These trends were adversely affected by socialist policies of expropriation, nationalisation, and collectivisation, but they nevertheless continued in milieus dominated by members of middle peasant families (Szelényi 1988: 5). Although Szelényi found 'socialist entrepreneurs' in the private plots that industrial workers and cooperative farmers tended in their free time, we would insist that, in East Germany at least, much of the activity in the cooperative farms themselves must be characterised as entrepreneurial. The point is not merely that socialist functionaries were responsible for complex management and accounting, as Martha Lampland (2002: 38–39) correctly observed, but that they often made common cause with cooperative members from farming families in seeking to increase production in a way that benefited not the state but their own enterprises. What is more, entrepreneurial orientations and activities have often survived the change of systems, not only among those who have re-established private farms but also among those chastised as red barons.

Agricultural policymakers in the Soviet zone (1945–49) and the German Democratic Republic, or GDR (1949–90), sought first to eliminate estate owners and large farmers and then to transform the middle farmers, who were viewed as unreliable allies in the struggle for socialism, into technocrats or proletarians (Hohmann 1985: 13–14). Considerable evidence

suggests, however, that East German agriculture was most successful when the socialist technocrats who were supposed to replace the farmers either came from farming families themselves or else adapted to the standards of those members of the farming classes who first resisted collectivisation but then made their peace with cooperatives and helped to make them successful. Not infrequently, the constellations in the agricultural enterprises of the late 1980s, which formed the basis for privatisation in the 1990s, must be understood in these terms.

We explore these issues with reference to two case studies located on opposite sides of the great divide of German agriculture. The territories that made up the GDR are traversed diagonally by the Elbe River, which marks the historical boundary between the large estates of the north-east and the smaller farms of the south-west (Abel 1967: 210–26). The first case study is set in Saxony, near the border with Saxony-Anhalt and Thuringia. Though it is East German, this field site is thoroughly West Elbian, both geographically and in its typical characteristics, which include small-scale agriculture and rural industry. In contrast, the second case study, which is set in Western Pomerania near the Polish border, belongs to the classic area of the East Elbian estates of the Junkers, the class of landholding aristocrats in Brandenburg-Prussia. After 1945 and again after 1990, both areas were subjected to the same policies, which induced parallel stages of development despite regional differences. Therefore, we review these policies and their effects briefly before turning to the case studies.

An Overview of Policies, 1945 to the Present

The examination of agricultural policy often throws revealing light on the structure and self-understanding of advanced industrial societies, despite the relatively modest significance of agricultural production for their economies. This is especially true of modern Germany, which, at the end of the Second World War, straddled the line dividing the market economies of the western alliance and the planned economies of the Soviet bloc. In the first years after the war, land reform was on the agenda in all the occupied zones of Germany, due especially to common perceptions regarding the propensity of the Junkers for militarism and aggression (Bauerkämper 1996: 8–12). Soon, however, the agricultural policies of the occupational zones diverged, as western authorities distanced themselves explicitly from what they viewed as the violation of property rights in the Soviet sphere of influence.

With the reconstruction and growth of the West German economy, agriculture became subject to market pressures, which induced the *Strukturwandel,* or structural transformation, of rural society, resulting in a reduction in the number of full-time farms and an increase in the average size of farms

(Bauerkämper 1997: 30–31). This process has continued, with increasing momentum, up to the present. It is important to note, however, that since the birth of the Federal Republic and the Common Market, economic pressures on agricultural producers have been buffered by substantial state subsidies (Eckart and Wollkopf 1994: 8–12). Under these conditions, the capitalisation of agricultural production has occurred in a way that has allowed most West German farms to retain the character of family businesses (Koester and Brooks 1997: 6).

In contrast, planners in the Soviet zone and the GDR engineered the dissolution first of large estates and then of family farms, replacing them with nationalised or collectivised agricultural conglomerates in which managers, technicians, and workers were supposed to be assimilated to the model provided by nationalised industries and the urban workforce. We can distinguish three phases of this transformation: land reform, collectivisation, and the industrialisation and specialisation of agricultural production.[3] A fourth phase, privatisation, began with the collapse of the East German party state in 1990.

Post-War Land Reform in the Soviet Zone

On 11 June 1945, just over one month after Germany's unconditional surrender to Allied forces, the Communist Party in the Soviet zone issued a call for the expropriation of large landed estates and the distribution of this land to 'farmers who were ruined and who lost their possessions in the war' (quoted in Bauerkämper 1994: 121). By early September, the governments of all five East German provinces had passed a *Bodenreform* (land reform) law based on the Communist Party draft. The laws prescribed expropriation of agricultural enterprises with 100 hectares or more and also of smaller farms if they belonged to war criminals or leading National Socialists.[4]

The expropriation of the large estates was carried out by local committees, which were strongly influenced by Communist Party members and Soviet authorities (Bauerkämper 1994: 122).[5] Owners were often sent packing overnight, though in some areas they were supported by their employees and managed to resist expropriation for an extended period (Bauerkämper

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[3] Hohmann (1985) distinguishes five stages: land reform (1945–49), class struggle in the countryside (1949–52/53), collectivisation (1952–60), consolidation and concentration through cooperation (1960–68), and industrialisation of agriculture (1968–83). For the purposes of our brief presentation, we have combined Hohmann's second and third phases as well as his fifth and sixth phases.

[4] One hectare is equal to 2.471 US acres.

[5] At this time, the Communist Party (KPD) and the Social Democratic Party (SPD) were still separate. They were joined in the Socialist Unity Party (SED) in April 1946.

2002: 216). The same committees were also responsible for redistributing plots of land averaging eight hectares to landless agricultural labours, to ethnic German refugees from eastern Europe, or to local farmers with very little land. In addition, many smaller garden plots were given to other needy persons, especially industrial workers (Bauerkämper 1997: 28).

Almost 3.3 million hectares of land were seized, two-thirds of which were redistributed and one-third of which remained in the possession of the state.[6] The proportions of confiscated land varied according to the history of land tenure in the various provinces. Saxony and Mecklenburg–Western Pomerania, the sites of our two case studies, respectively, represent extremes: In the south-western provinces of Thuringia and Saxony, only 10% to 13% of all arable land had belonged to enterprises with more than 100 hectares, whereas in the northernmost province, this was true of 48% of cultivated fields (Hohmann 1985: 15).

The chief beneficiaries of the land reform were the so-called *Neubauern,* or new farmers, who occupied almost 210,000 new farms in the Soviet zone. New farmers received proprietary rights to small plots, but not unconditional ownership. Their landholdings could not be sold, leased, pawned, or used as securities for loans, nor could they be used for non-agricultural purposes. Even in the south-western territories of East Germany, which were characterised by small to medium-sized farms, the land reform resulted in an increase in the number of farms and a decrease in their average size. This effect was only temporary, however, because over the next several years, many new farmers gave up their plots or joined the first agricultural cooperatives (Bauerkämper 1997: 29).

Explaining the goals of those who planned and carried out the East German land reform of the mid- to late 1940s remains controversial to this day (see Bauerkämper 1996). Andreas Dix (2001: 111) is probably correct in observing that such complex processes necessarily involve many actors with interests and agendas too varied to be reduced to a single motive. Nevertheless, the importance of Soviet precedents and the parallels to other Soviet bloc states cannot be denied (Wädekin 1982).

The Collectivisation of Agricultural Production

East German agricultural policy of the late 1940s and the 1950s was characterised by a number of reversals, but the general trend was clear. The

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[6] Some of the land that remained in the possession of the state was later used by *Volkseigene Güter* (VEG), or state farms. Machines and tools from expropriated estates became the basis for *Machinen-Ausleih-Stationen* (MAS), or machine lending stations, which were later renamed *Machinen-Traktoren-Stationen* (MTS), or machine tractor stations.

Neubauern (new farmers) were the intended beneficiaries of policy initiatives, whereas the members of the traditional class of *Bauern* (peasants or farmers)—who were much more productive—were subjected to various kinds of political and economic pressures. This applied especially to the *Grossbauern,* or large farmers, the German equivalent of the Russian kulaks. In fact, *Grossbauer* was a heterogeneous category, because it included all farms of 20 hectares or more.[7] Pressure was exerted by limiting farmers' access to factors of production such as machinery, fertiliser, and feed. The restructuring of labour in the GDR made it increasingly difficult to acquire hired hands for seasonal tasks (Bauerkämper 1994: 128–31). Perhaps most important was the introduction of production norms, which prescribed the amounts of crops and animal products that farms of different sizes had to deliver to the state annually.

After the passage of new laws in the late 1940s, per-hectare quotas made the situation of large farmers difficult, if not impossible. The result was the frequent abandonment of large farms, whose owners often fled to West Germany. Between 1950 and 1952, about 5,000 large farmers quit (Bauerkämper 1994: 133–34). Abandoned farms were confiscated by the state and given into the care of local authorities. Once the delegates of the Second Party Conference of the Socialist Unity Party had voted in July 1952 to initiate an ambitious program for the *Aufbau des Sozialismus* (construction of socialism) in all spheres of social and economic life, these abandoned farms often provided the basis for the founding of the first socialist cooperatives (Bauerkämper 1997: 30).

The decisions made at the Second Party Conference allowed for the creation of *Landwirtschaftliche Produktionsgenossenschaften* (LPG), or agricultural cooperatives.[8] There were three different types (Kurjo 1985). LPG Type I was a partially collectivised form, in which members pooled their arable land and raised crops together but kept animals privately in their own barns. LPG Type II, which occurred infrequently, was an intermediary

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[7] Bauerkämper (1994: 133–35). For the Pomeranian case study it is important to note that farms with more than 50 hectares were subject to even greater pressures than those with 20 to 50 hectares (Hohmann 1985: 16).

[8] In this chapter, we use the acronym LPG for both the singular form (*Produktionsgenossenschaft*) and the plural form (*Produktionsgenossenschaften*). There is some question whether *Landwirtschaftliche Produktionsgenossenschaft* should be translated into English as 'cooperative' or 'collective' farm. Buechler and Buechler (2002: 321) suggest that 'cooperative' be reserved for organisations in which membership is voluntary, which does not apply to the LPG. In choosing the literal translation, 'agricultural cooperative' or 'cooperative farm', we do not mean to make a statement about the status of the LPG as a 'genuine' cooperative. As our exposition should make clear, however, we do see the history of the LPG as a struggle among managers, members, and policymakers for control of this curious institution.

form involving the cooperative usage of arable land, forests, beasts of burden, and farm machinery. LPG Type III was the fully collectivised form, in which land, animals, machinery, and even farm buildings were pooled and managed by the elected chairperson and his or her staff of 'brigadiers', or managers.[9]

Landowners who joined the LPG Type III, including both those who came straight from private farms and those who had earlier been members of Type I or Type II cooperatives, were required to pay the so-called *Inventarbeitrag,* or inventory contribution. The minimal amount paid was 500 marks per hectare of land brought into the LPG (Schier 2001: 71). Depending, however, on the estimated net worth of the particular LPG Type III, landowners were required to make a further payment, a *Fondsausgleich,* or assets adjustment, which could amount to more than 3,000 additional marks per hectare. The amount due was balanced against the value of the animals, equipment, seed, and harvest that the new member brought into the LPG, and the difference was paid in cash. Such payments on the part of those joining a cooperative make sense if one can assume that the decision to join was voluntary. But because joining the LPG Type III was voluntary only in theory, it is not surprising that many landowners felt that the inventory contribution and the adjustment to assets added insult to injury. Such coerced payments had far-reaching consequences for social relations under socialism and for the distribution of cooperative assets after 1990.

In the first year of collectivisation, Type I cooperatives predominated, but by 1953, Type III cooperatives were founded more frequently (Bauerkämper 1997: 32–33). Typically, the fully collectivised cooperatives were peopled largely by agricultural labourers and 'new farmers', whereas the owners of private farms declined to join any cooperative at all, preferring to maintain their autonomy. The result was that the socialist cooperatives struggled while the private sector continued to operate at a high level of productivity. For this reason, policymakers briefly entertained the possibility of a dualistic agrarian structure combining private farms and cooperatives. They then decided instead to force the completion of the process of collectivisation by the spring of 1960 (Bauerkämper 1997: 33).

In the late 1950s, political authorities began sending teams of agitators, made up of party members from factories and educational institutions, into villages throughout East Germany in order to persuade, harangue, or bully farmers into joining the LPG. The outcome of the campaign was

[9] In the LPG, women often did manual labour in crop production (especially in the early years) or worked in animal husbandry, the cafeterias, or administration. Although there were some female chairpersons and brigadiers, the highest position achieved by a woman was often that of chief accountant. Cf. Schier 2001: 202–12.

preordained, so that even the most stubborn farmers were eventually forced to sign up (Brauer, Ernst, and Willisch 1999: 1338; Eidson 1998a: 102). Not surprisingly, the result of forced collectivisation was the proliferation of the only partially collectivised Type I cooperatives, so that a single village often had one LPG Type III and two or three LPG Type I. Nevertheless, by the end of April 1960, practically all farmers had joined one cooperative farm or another. Private owners retained legal title to their land but lost control of its use and its yields (Bauerkämper 1997: 33–34).

The founding of a large number of cooperatives of the simplest type represented a compromise solution. In this way, the Socialist Unity Party achieved its goal of full collectivisation while most farmers continued to work their fields cooperatively with neighbours of their choice and to profit from private animal husbandry. The long-term goals of policymakers, however, were to consolidate all local LPG in a single Type III cooperative and then to begin merging local LPG into larger units encompassing several villages (Hohmann 1985). This was supposed to lead to increased production, but socio-political goals, such as transforming the members of that problematic class the Bauern (peasants or farmers) into wage-earning or salaried clients of the socialist state, were equally important for state planners (Hohmann 1985: 13–14; cf. Boehme et al. 1978: 489, 524). To this end, the pressures that had first been applied to independent farmers were now applied to the Type I cooperatives (cf. Eidson 1998a: 103–4). The result was that by the mid-1970s all LPG Type I had been incorporated into the fully collectivised cooperatives. But by then, LPG formation was being eclipsed by the next development, namely, the formation of much larger 'units of cooperation'.

Industrialisation and Specialisation of Agricultural Production

The developments of the late 1960s and the 1970s can be summarised as four items: first, an increase in the size and a reduction in the number of LPG through the merging of local cooperatives into larger regional units; second, the introduction of new, more efficient agricultural machinery; third, a decrease in the number of cooperative farmers and agricultural workers, who were rendered redundant by technological advances and absorbed in the industrial sector; and fourth, the separation of LPG for crop production and animal husbandry. By the end of the 1970s, all LPG had been reorganised into *Kooperationseinheiten,* or units of cooperation, each of which had a single *LPG-Pflanzenproduktion* (LPG for crop production) at its centre, with one or more *LPG-Tierproduktion* (LPG for livestock or animal husbandry) arranged around it. Each LPG kept separate accounts, but the LPG for ani-

mal husbandry had little or no arable land and were dependent upon their partners in crop production for fodder.

Taken together, collectivisation, industrialisation, and specialisation resulted in a declining number of increasingly large enterprises. In 1960, when collectivisation was largely completed, there were 19,000 LPG in fewer than half as many rural communes.[10] The number of LPG was then reduced to 9,000 by 1970 and to fewer than 4,000 by 1982. During the same period, the percentage of the workforce employed in agriculture fell from 17% to around 11% of the total (Merkel 1985: 786–87). Among the nearly 4,000 LPG in the last year of the GDR, just over 1,100 were LPG for crop production, with an average of 4,500 hectares of arable land (Koester and Brooks 1997: 27).[11] In addition, there were about 80 *Volkseigene Güter* (VEG), or state farms, for crop production, with approximately 5,000 hectares of arable land each.[12] At the same time, approximately 5% of the West German workforce was active in 650,000 farms with an average of just over 18 hectares each (Koester and Brooks 1997: 28).

The merging of local LPG and the creation of large specialised units which then entered into relationships of cooperation corresponded to planners' notions of the lawlike development of industrial production in the agricultural sector (Boehme et al. 1978: 488–90). Anyone who has ever talked to the former cooperative farmers themselves, however, has heard many stories of the resulting inefficiencies.[13] Indeed, many former members of the LPG interpret the separation of crop production and animal husbandry as a strategy of domination and control (Eidson 1998a: 105–6; Schier 2001: 76–78). The LPG Type III, in which both forms of agricultural production were combined, had enjoyed a good deal of flexibility and had exploited it not only to realise policy objectives but also to increase earnings. It is well known that farmers in socialist countries could earn money by diverting fodder to animals kept in private barns (Eckart 1983), but the same strategy was also used within the LPG. Managers sometimes withheld crops from the

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[10] In 1960, there were a total of 9,375 local administrative units in the GDR, 8,204 of which were classified as rural because they had 2,000 residents or fewer (Staatliche Zentralverwaltung für Statistik 1961: 25). Some of these rural communes were made up of clusters of neighbouring villages that had been joined together in the administrative reforms of the 1930s. Even so, the concentration of LPG was, initially, quite high.

[11] The 2,700 LPG for animal husbandry had, on average, only 31 hectares of land each (Koester and Brooks 1997: 27).

[12] The state farms for animal husbandry numbered 311, and there were a further 75 state farms of a miscellaneous character (Koester and Brooks 1997: 27).

[13] Brauer, Ernst, and Willisch (1999: 1344) write in support of GDR policies for the industrialisation and specialisation of agricultural production, but their comparison of developments in the GDR and the United States fails to take into account basic differences between planned and market economies.

state and diverted them to their animals in order to enrich the fodder and increase milk and meat production, which was much more lucrative (Eidson 2001: 19–20). But because the new, specialised LPG kept separate accounts, the crop producers could not divert extra fodder to their colleagues in animal husbandry without incurring losses. Consequently, the provisioning of fodder was often deficient, at least in the eyes of the members of the LPG for animal husbandry. This led, in turn, to conflicts among the supposed partners in the larger 'unit of cooperation'. For this reason, some former cooperative farmers described the separation of crop production and animal husbandry to us with the phrase 'divide and conquer' (Eidson 1998a: 105–7).

The negative response of many LPG members to the separation of crop production and animal husbandry provides evidence of the survival of the independent farming class—or of the attitudes associated with that class—within socialist enterprises (Laschewski 1998: 108–20). In the first decades of socialist rule, the Bauern, the landowning farmers, were viewed as an intractable kind of social material that would have to be reshaped in the likeness of the working class (Ulbricht 1952: 90–102). Throughout the 40-year history of the GDR, this goal was often announced in official statements, but it was only partially achieved (Boehme et al. 1978: 489, 524; cf. Verdery 2002). One of the main mechanisms of control was the appointment of politically reliable LPG chairpersons, who were instated through pro forma elections. Insofar as appointees were also professionally qualified, however, there was at least a potential conflict between the goals of policy-makers and those of the cooperative farm managers themselves.

Were LPG chairpersons merely instruments of the party state? This is the conclusion reached by Brauer, Ernst, and Willisch (1999: 1368, 1387), but the evidence from our case studies suggests that successful LPG chairpersons had to secure the cooperation of LPG members, especially those from farming families. At the very least, this required that they accommodate the interests and the attitudes of the qualified farmers—but this was relatively unproblematic, because the chairpersons often shared those interests and attitudes. This, in our view, was the real 'alliance' underlying successful cooperative farms. We refer not to the officially propagated 'alliance of workers and peasants' (Ponomarjow et al. 1960: 543; Ulbricht 1952: 102) but to the actual cooperation among LPG managers and LPG members who once were independent farmers (see Schier 1997: 46). Other LPG members, including recruits from the working class, also participated in this alliance, insofar as they were willing to adapt to the standards and adopt the projects of entrepreneurial managers and farmers. Together, they exercised their expertise in agriculture in order to establish and maintain a successful enter-

prise and in this way increase monetary awards and promote their own well-being (Buechler and Buechler 2002: 96–99; Eidson 1998a: 104–6).

The farmers who eventually made their peace with the LPG, despite their initial resistance to collectivisation, later viewed the early to mid-1970s as the heyday of cooperative agriculture in the GDR (Laschewski 1998: 108–9). This was the time when the cooperative farmers, whether in the remaining Type I farms or in the augmented Type III farms, earned good money by pursing a variety of strategies. And it was just this cosy arrangement that was broken up by the separation of crop production and animal husbandry.

Privatisation

The 1980s were supposed to be the decade of large-scale and efficient industrial production in the agricultural sector, but success was hampered by a scarcity of replacement parts and the perennial friction between the LPG for crop production and those for animal husbandry. Thanks to the efforts of some farm managers and policymakers, progress was made toward undoing the strict separation of the two branches of agricultural production, but then the development of socialist agriculture was interrupted by the events of 1989 and 1990 (Laschewski 2000: 50).

In reviewing the privatisation of East German agriculture, it is important to distinguish between the state farm sector and the cooperative farm sector. As nationalised enterprises, the state farms fell under the control of the Treuhand-Anstalt, the federal agency responsible for the privatisation of all state property.[14] In addition, the state farms were affected more fundamentally by decisions regarding land that had been expropriated between 1945 and 1949, because nearly all of the land they cultivated belonged to this category. In contrast, the land cultivated by the LPG combined private property and land reform acreage in roughly equal proportions (Koester and Brooks 1997: 5). According to the Einigungsvertrag (Unification Treaty), which was signed by representatives of both German states on 20 September 1990, real estate that had been expropriated during the land reform was exempted from the otherwise valid principle of restoring property to its

[14] The Treuhand-Anstalt was created through a legislative act of the Volkskammer, or GDR parliament, on 17 June 1990, and this act was later incorporated into the Unification Treaty.

previous owners.[15] Rather, it remained in the possession either of the state or of the relatively few 'new farmers' (or their heirs) who had stayed in agriculture and whose ownership rights were formally recognised in the last months of the GDR (Koester and Brooks 1997: 7).

In contrast, guidelines for the privatisation of the LPG were provided by the Landwirtschaftsanpassungsgesetz (Agricultural Adjustment Act), which was passed by the Volkskammer, the GDR parliament, on 29 June of 1990 and which retained its validity when the new federal states of East Germany joined the Federal Republic of Germany on 3 October of that year.[16] The Agricultural Adjustment Act made provisions for the restoration of property rights to landowners, the distribution of cooperative assets among LPG members, and the liquidation of the LPG or their transformation to new legal forms.[17] Those who had been obliged to contribute their land upon entry into the LPG had usually retained legal title, but now they regained control over the use of their land.[18] For many, this meant that they began receiving land rents, but landowners who wanted to return to private farming—the *Wiedereinrichter,* or 're-establishers'—could actually take possession of their land or of plots of equivalent size and value. Furthermore, if liquid assets were available, all LPG members had the right to be reimbursed in proportion to their own contributions to cooperative assets. In the amended version of 3 July 1991, the Agricultural Adjustment Act recognised three kinds of contributions: inventory contributions made by landowners; use rights that landowners had granted to the LPG but that had not been remunerated adequately; and contributions made through labour.

Finally, the Agricultural Adjustment Act allowed LPG members to vote on whether to liquidate the LPG or to restructure it in a way consistent with the laws of the Federal Republic of Germany. Again, in the amended

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[15] The exemption of land reform acreage from restitution was first agreed upon in the Gemeinsame Erklärung zur Regelung offener Vermögensfragen (Joint Statement on Questions Regarding the Ownership of Assets), which was issued by the East and West German governments on 15 July 1990. The Joint Statement was appended in its entirety to the Unification Treaty. For discussion of the controversies surrounding the land reform, the Joint Statement, and the Unification Treaty, see Bauerkämper 1996, 1999.

[16] New representatives to the Volkskammer were elected democratically in March 1990.

[17] On the first version of the Agricultural Adjustment Act, see Brauer, Ernst, and Willisch 1999: 1388–90. For the complete text of the law with all subsequent amendments, see Rohde 2001.

[18] Because socialist agricultural enterprises had developed over several decades without regard to private property, there were many problems regarding the precise location and physical condition of particular pieces of real estate. For example, many privately owned plots were inaccessible, while others had cooperative buildings on them or roads that ran through them. Unravelling such tangled property relations was another goal of the Agricultural Adjustment Act.

version of July 1991 the law recognised a number of possibilities, including the registered cooperative (eG), the corporation with limited liability (GmbH), the joint stock company (AG), and a mixed form combining a limited company and a limited partnership (GmbH & Co. KG), among others.[19] The new enterprises retained responsibility for debt incurred during the socialist era, for an equitable division of assets, and for facilitating the founding of private farms by former members.

Table 2.1: Legal Forms, Numbers, and Average Sizes of Agricultural Enterprises in Germany, 2001

Legal Form	East Germany		West Germany	
	Number	Avg. Size (ha)	Number	Avg. Size (ha)
Single-operator	24,200	56	399,500	26
Partnerships	2,700	330	12,100	70
Corporations	1,800	680	700	25
Joint stock company	100	1,247	39	261
Cooperatives	1,200	1,419	200	57

Source: Adapted from Table 8 (Landwirtschaftliche Betriebe nach Rechtsform) in the annual report of the Bundesministerium für Verbraucherschutz (2002).
Note: In comparing the numbers for the two 'halves' of re-united Germany, recall that East Germany makes up just under one-third of the total area but has just over one-third of all arable land.

The most striking result of the privatisation of the East German agrarian sector has been the survival of the LPG or, rather, their legal successors. In 2001, ten years after the restructuring process was completed, there were 1,200 registered cooperatives in East Germany, with an average size of 1,419 hectares, and 100 joint stock companies, with an average size of 1,247 hectares. It is safe to assume that most, if not all, of these enterprises are legal successors to former LPG. In addition, there were 1,800 corporate

[19] The German names are as follows: eingetragene Genossenschaft (eG), Gesellschaft mit beschränkter Haftung (GmbH), Aktiengesellschaft (AG), and Gesellschaft mit beschränkter Haftung und Kommanditgesellschaft (GmbH & Co. KG).

farms, with an average size of 680 hectares. Though not all of these corporations are legal successors to LPG, many of them were founded by former LPG members using LPG assets. Others have been bought in whole by entrepreneurs from West Germany or the Netherlands (cf. Buechler and Buechler 2002: 229–73). In contrast, there were in the same year 24,200 single-operator farms in East Germany, with an average size of 56 hectares. Therefore, though single-operator family farms are more numerous than LPG successors in East Germany, the LPG successors cultivate a greater portion of the total arable land. In contrast, single-operator family farms still dominate agricultural production in West Germany. West German cooperative and corporate farms are fewer in number and much smaller than their East German counterparts (Table 2.1).

Since 1990, approximately one-fifth of the legal successors to the LPG have gone out of business. Nevertheless, the surviving enterprises remain the dominant factor in East German agriculture (cf. Laschewski 2000). This rate of success was made possible by reducing the agricultural workforce, withholding some of the liquid assets that would otherwise have been distributed among former LPG members, and taking advantage of massive state funding for buying new equipment and modernising technical facilities (Koester and Brooks 1997: 14–19). Due to their size, the LPG successors have also benefited disproportionately from per-hectare direct payments made in conjunction with the Common Agricultural Policy of the European Union, or EU (Koester and Brooks 1997: 20).

All in all, the value of the transfer payments that have facilitated the privatisation and restructuring of rural East Germany is unprecedented in the postsocialist transition (Koester and Brooks 1997: vi). In addition to various direct and indirect payments to farming enterprises, unemployment benefits and the public financing of infrastructural development must also be mentioned. The result is that residents in the rural communities of the former GDR have fared better than their counterparts in other postsocialist countries. Nevertheless, unemployment is high and discontent is widespread. The population is declining and the average age rising as many young people go west in search of work.

Given the conditions just described, the privatisation of East German agriculture has been fraught with controversy from its beginning. The heirs of land reform victims have continually challenged the conditions of the Unification Treaty, but so far they have lost all court battles (Bauerkämper

1999: 67).[20] The implementation of the Agricultural Adjustment Act has also proved problematic, especially with regard to the distribution of assets, the restructuring the LPG, and the relationships between successor enterprises and former cooperative members who have re-established private farms.

A substantial minority of former LPG members have sued the successor enterprises, claiming that they have not received their fair share of cooperative assets (Jähnichen 1998: 24). Indeed, such claimants have won important rulings, which have resulted in the amendment of the Agricultural Adjustment Act. What is more, legal experts have claimed that all LPG restructurings were flawed and that 189 of a total of 1,719 cases (or 11%) should not be viewed as legally binding (Bayer 2001). The enduring conflict between LPG successors and landowners who have re-established private farms is sustained especially by the competition for access to land. It is a peculiarity of property relations in contemporary East Germany that more than 90% of all farmland is cultivated by those who lease it rather than own it (Jähnichen 1998: 40–41). This may be explained with reference to the following factors. First, before collectivisation, many regions in East Germany consisted of small-scale farms, especially after the post-war land reform. This meant that in 1990 the majority of landowners owned insufficient land to establish a farm that could survive under late-twentieth-century conditions. Second, after 1990, few owners of farmland chose to take up farming themselves, because they were too old and their children had often chosen other professions (Brauer, Ernst, and Willisch 1999: 1359–61). Third, the government agencies that administer state-owned land have, until recently, chosen to lease it to agricultural enterprises rather than sell it (Koester and Brooks 1997: 8). Few agricultural entrepreneurs today are satisfied with the amount of land they have, and all face stiff competition in leasing land from smallholders and in buying or leasing land from various state agencies.

The controversies surrounding the privatisation of East German agriculture have resulted in a split of farmers among various interest groups (Laschewski 1998: 63–66). After much discussion in the early 1990s, the representatives of the Deutscher Bauernverband (German Farmers Association), the central lobby for farmers in Germany, recognised the newly established regional associations of East Germany, which were dominated by

[20] The so-called *Entschädigungs- und Ausgleichsleistungsgesetz* (EALG), or Compensation and Indemnification Act, of 1994 was supposed to offer some consolation to former owners or their heirs by allowing them to buy back expropriated properties (or the equivalents thereof) from the state at favourable prices (Bauerkämper 1999: 69; Hagedorn 1997). Many former owners are dissatisfied with this measure and complain that it also allows the legal successors of the LPG to buy inexpensive state-owned land.

managers from the LPG successors. As a result, many of the private farmers of East Germany, who had already founded their own interest group, did not become members of the German Farmers Association (Jähnichen 1998: 25). Subsequently, the private farmers split again, creating a fragmented organisational landscape.

Indeed, this fragmentation of interests and opinions is typical of the countryside as a whole. The spectrum ranges from those who want to see the LPG successors succeed to those who deny them the right to exist, and from those who feel that they have been defrauded by cooperative farm managers to those who complain that a whole class of lawyers now specialises in legal 'hair splitting' that endangers successor enterprises and the few jobs they still provide. Still, regardless of their party affiliation, representatives of the provincial governments of the new federal states of East Germany typically support the LPG successors, viewing them as important enterprises in regional economies. Even Christian Democratic policymakers have often surprised their West German partners by throwing their support behind the legal successors to the cooperative farms (e.g., Goos 1996; Jähnichen 1998). Indeed, after 1990, it was not uncommon for former mid-level LPG managers to emerge as Christian Democratic politicians of the postsocialist era.[21] Thus, the division among the proponents and opponents of the former socialist cooperatives runs straight through even the most conservative of the mainstream political parties.

First Case Study: North-West Saxony

Our two case studies are both based on cooperative farms, which were much more numerous than state farms in the GDR. In each case, the unit of analysis is the 'unit of cooperation', that is, a complex of cooperative farms that was formed in the 1970s by merging several neighbouring LPG while separating them into interdependent enterprises for crop production and animal husbandry. We chose to focus on these units of cooperation because they represent the culmination of developments under socialism and served as the point of departure in processes of privatisation (cf. Küster 2001).

[21] For example, Rolf Jähnichen, a former LPG manager from an area near the village in our first case study, was the Christian Democratic minister for agriculture in Kurt Biedenkopf's administration in Saxony from 1990 to 1998. It was the middle-level managers who emerged as politicians after 1990, because they were trained agronomists who, not being in the Socialist Unity Party, could advance no further. Typically, they were in one of the 'bloc parties', such as the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) or the Bauernpartei (Farmers Party), which were associated with the Socialist Unity Party. Cf. Brauer, Ernst, and Willisch (1999: 1389).

The first case study is set in the north-west corner of the state of Saxony, in the southern portion of East Germany. Prior to collectivisation, the rural portions of this area were characterised by small to medium-sized farms. These were owned by independent farmers who had enjoyed many liberties

since the early modern period and who had been able to establish themselves as small-scale entrepreneurs during the liberal reforms of the mid-nineteenth century (Blaschke 1965). What is more, this part of East Germany has a tradition of handicrafts and industry that sets it apart from the purely rural expanses of the north. The precise location in which John Eidson did his fieldwork is the *Südraum* (Southern Region) of the city of Leipzig (see Map), which has a mixed agricultural and industrial economy.[22]

Representing the southernmost extent of the northern German plain, this flat landscape is crossed by several smaller rivers that flow north toward Leipzig. The city emerged during the Middle Ages as a commercial centre at the intersection of trade routes linking the Mediterranean to the North Sea and western and eastern Europe. Leipzig's hinterland remained largely agricultural until the mid-nineteenth century, when the construction of one of the earliest European railways helped initiate a process of industrialisation. In the late nineteenth century, modern technologies made possible the exploitation of rich deposits of bituminous coal, which fuelled the transformation of the commercial city into an industrial centre. At first, the sale of mining concessions brought riches to many farmers in the area surrounding Leipzig. With the expansion of surface mines and the growth of the energy and chemical industries, conflicts over land use became more frequent. Simultaneously, industry absorbed the workers who were no longer required in agricultural production, providing them with relatively high-paying jobs (Bischoff 1997).

Within this area, Eidson's case study is based in a group of villages between the middle centres of Groitzsch and Borna. During the 1970s, this cluster of settlements developed into a unit of cooperation that was centred on the village of Stolpen, near Groitzsch. Stolpen itself was a small village of only ten farms with up to 25 hectares of arable land each, but it became the hub of an area encompassing 15 villages. Each of these villages featured smaller farms, with 5 to 10 hectares of land, and medium-sized farms, with 10 to 20 hectares. In most villages there were a few farms of about 30 hectares, but only 4 of the 15 villages had a noble estate, the largest of which had 170 hectares of arable land. This pattern was representative of the wider

[22] Eidson's fieldwork in the Southern Region of Leipzig began in June 2001 and ended in September 2002. Methods included participant observation, informal interviews, more than 20 formal interviews, and research in local archives. In addition, he has drawn on more than 20 further interviews that Hans Ketzer conducted with residents of Breunsdorf, a village in the field site, in 1994, and on research he conducted in the village archive of Breunsdorf in 1996 and 1997 (Eidson 1998a, 1998b).

region, including north-west Saxony and neighbouring parts of Thuringia and Sachsen-Anhalt.[23]

The land reform of 1945 changed the landscape in the Southern Region of Leipzig, though the effect was not as dramatic as it was in the north. In the area between Groitzsch and Borna, the land from four noble estates, totalling only 580 hectares, was distributed among just over 100 'new farmers'. Established farmers continued to account for more than two-thirds of all farming enterprises.

From 1953 to 1958, 13 LPG were founded in this area, 8 of which were of the fully collectivised variety. The members of these LPG Type III included especially agricultural labourers and new farmers, and their performance was correspondingly weak. As Lothar Arnold, one of Eidson's informants, said, 'For the first few years, we didn't take the Type III cooperatives seriously at all. They just sort of vegetated'.[24] Arnold, who came from a landowning farming family in the area, joined the Socialist Unity Party and became chairman of the LPG in a village that was later united with Stolpen. Most farmers and farmer's sons preferred to avoid the party and to remain independent, but they were subject to the pressures described in the previous section, including limited access to resources and high production norms.

During forced collectivisation in the spring of 1960, some farmers joined one of the existing LPG Type III, but most preferred to help in founding several new, partially collectivised LPG Type I. The Type I cooperatives usually included a small group of acquainted farmers who cultivated their fields together, with the aim of fulfilling production norms and producing enough surplus fodder for private animal husbandry. Landowning farmers usually joined the labourers and new farmers in the Type III cooperatives only when they had large farms and too little help—for example, if there were no sons, or the husband had never returned from the war. Given the social and economic heterogeneity of the various kinds of LPG, it is evident that the term 'full collectivisation' actually referred to a fragmented and conflict-laden range of institutions, the participants in which often viewed one another with condescension or resentment (Eidson 1998a: 101–4).

The Type III cooperatives improved dramatically once the members of local farming families were integrated into them in a process that began in 1960 and culminated in the early 1970s. 'When ... the capable farmers also

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[23] See Laschewski 1998: 117. Even by regional standards, however, the noble estates near Stolpen were comparatively small. In 1945, East German agricultural enterprises with more than 100 hectares had an average size of 350 hectares (Koester and Brooks 1997: 4).

[24] In this chapter, all quotations are from real persons, but all personal names and some place names have been changed to protect our informants' privacy.

started joining the [LPG] Type III', said Lothar Arnold, 'there was a qualitative leap'. He commented on the incorporation of the LPG Type I into the LPG Type III in the early 1970s by saying, 'There was some friction over the inventory contributions. But after one year that was pretty much sorted out. There were some who kept starting up about it again, but the majority concentrated fully on production and helped the LPG move forwards. ... We had a lot of members of the cooperative who were very active'.

Such statements describe how farmers were integrated into the LPG and suggest that some of them came to accept the cooperative as a farming enterprise. Different LPG had varying reputations for being 'strong', 'weak', or 'mediocre'. The success or failure of an LPG depended upon the management and staff, the social composition of the workforce, the available resources, and management strategies. In some of the LPG that had a reputation for being 'strong', members still devoted much energy to private production with the blessing or tolerance of management. Stolpen became the centre of an emerging regional complex precisely because the LPG management effectively discouraged private production.

One important factor in the development of the LPG in Stolpen was an enterprising individual whom we shall call Hans Egger. Egger was born in 1926 to an ethnic German family near Hermannstadt in Romania, where his father had been the manager of a large farm. After serving briefly at the end of the Second World War, the young Egger was sent directly from a Soviet prison camp to East Germany, where he continued with agronomy, the course of study he had begun in Romania. Upon completing his studies in Leipzig, Egger began work at the machine lending station outside of Groitzsch. In 1957, he was transferred to the nearby village of Stolpen, where he quickly became the *Vorsitzender,* or chairman.

By all reports—which have been confirmed by observation—Egger is a natural leader, but other factors led him to develop his abilities in a particular way. Though trained in agronomy, he was without local roots or private inheritance. He had no farmyard or barn where he could engage in extensive private production. Rather, he resided at first in subsidised urban housing and later moved even farther away from the village into a private house in a suburban development. As head of the LPG in Stolpen, he was able to gather a group of loyal lieutenants, most of whom similarly had little or no vested interest in the promotion of private production. Egger joined the Bauernpartei, or Farmers Party, rather than the Socialist Unity Party, but one of his assistants and chief supporters was the Socialist Unity Party secretary, a man from a working-class family who had married the daughter of a new farmer in a neighbouring village. Finally, Egger and his crew had the advantage of working with the land of a number of abandoned farms, since the owners of

the largest farms in the village had given up and fled. In short, Stolpen had the leader, the staff, and the resources to 'make a go of it'. By 1960, when the last of the independent farmers were forced to enter into a cooperative, they were sufficiently impressed with Egger's results to join his LPG Type III rather than found their own LPG Type I. This, according to Egger, was the last ingredient in his recipe for success: 'The clincher was when the good farmers joined the Type III cooperative right away'.

Egger's strategy for building up the LPG involved increasing both production and salaries. In the LPG, income was distributed according to two factors: *Arbeitseinheiten,* or labour units, and amount of land contributed. Type I and Type III cooperatives differed with regard to the percentage of the total remuneration that could be awarded in terms of the latter. In the LPG Type I, up to 80% of one's salary could be paid (often in the form of fodder) according to the amount of land one had contributed. In the LPG Type III, a maximum of 20% of one's salary could be accounted for in this way (Kurjo 1985: 803). When Egger took over the direction of the LPG Type III in Stolpen, he decided to have 100% of salaries paid in cash according to work units. In this way, he sought to encourage all members to have a stake in improving both productivity and salaries, while discouraging landowning members from concentrating on private production in the evenings. Increased production meant a higher value for each labour unit and further investment in the LPG. These led in turn to the improvement of work conditions and production.

In the mixed economy of the area south of Leipzig, other, extraneous factors impinged upon agricultural production—namely, developments in coal mining and related industries. Coal mining had characterised the wider region since the early twentieth century, but it was not until the 1960s that three surface mines were opened in the area surrounding the village of Stolpen. These mines eventually destroyed four full villages, several farming facilities, and approximately 1,400 hectares of arable land in the vicinity of Stolpen—though several hundred hectares were later recultivated and returned to the cooperative. In each case, Egger painstakingly calculated the value of the assets that were lost, and he was able to appeal successfully to authorities for compensation for his LPG. This came in the form of money, which was used to build new central stalls to replace those in the farmyards of the lost villages and apartment buildings to house resettled villagers. In an interview with Eidson in 2002, Egger joked that his negotiating partner from the nationalised coal concern told him reproachfully that he would probably have done well in the West.

Given both the weakening of local cooperative farms through coal mining and Egger's extraordinary abilities as a manager, the LPG in Stolpen

began absorbing the cooperative farms of surrounding villages at an unusually quick rate. Often, Egger encountered some initial resistance from cooperatives seeking to maintain their autonomy. But, he says, he was eventually able to gain their trust when they saw that he was successful and that Stolpen paid an unusually large amount for labour units.[25] Thus, by 1974 the LPG in Stolpen, augmented by a series of mergers, had become one of the strongest cooperative farms in the region. In the memory of informants, the early 1970s represent a high point in the development of their enterprise. This was the time when the members of the LPG 'organised' building materials through unofficial channels and built their own *Kulturhaus,* which subsequently became a centre for social and cultural activities not only for the LPG but also for the industrial enterprises of the region.

The last phase in the development of the LPG involved the formation of units of cooperation. For the LPG in Stolpen, this process began in 1974 with limited forms of cooperation in crop production with two villages to the south-east, Heuersdorf and Breunsdorf, which were already earmarked for destruction in the wake of an expanding coal mine. Then, in 1976, Heuersdorf was assimilated while Breunsdorf became Stolpen's partner in a Kooperative Abteilung Pflanzenproduktion (KAP), or cooperating unit for crop production. Finally, in 1979, the LPG for crop production was founded in Stolpen. There were two associated LPG for animal husbandry, in Stolpen and Breunsdorf, respectively, which later merged into a single unit. These mergers were accompanied by reductions in force, as many workers became redundant or preferred to take jobs in industry.

The separation of crop production and animal husbandry had implications not only for production but also for power and authority within management. Egger opted to become the head of animal husbandry in Stolpen, largely because it contained the construction division, which was his 'darling'. In such units of cooperation, however, it was usually crop production that held the stronger position, and Stolpen was no exception (cf. Laschewski 1998: 102–4). Its central LPG for crop production was headed by a younger man whom Egger had hired and promoted, Jens Kohse, a Socialist Unity Party member who was also the son of a family with 20 hectares in a village several kilometres to the south. It often happened that the sons of farming families were sent to agricultural colleges with the intention of bringing them back and giving them management positions in the LPG. At the same time, there were some farmers who encouraged their children to pursue alternative careers.

[25] Egger reports that his LPG in Stolpen paid 13 marks per work unit, whereas some neighbouring LPG paid only 6 or 7 marks.

In 1990, the management of the LPG in Stolpen was quick to act. A joint assembly of the LPG for crop production and animal husbandry in April resulted in a vote to join as a single unit as soon as possible. One of first joint projects was the division of assets among members of the cooperative. All informants agree that this process was especially controversial in Stolpen, and most offer the same explanation. Due to a combination of good management and compensatory payments from the coal mining concern of the socialist era, the LPG in Stolpen had unusually large liquid assets, so there were more resources to fight over. In early 1990, management began dividing assets 'under time pressure and without any legal guidelines', as the head accountant reported. Guidelines were later provided by the Agricultural Adjustment Act, which was subsequently subjected to various amendments. As a result, the division of assets had to be corrected several times.

Initially, the LPG management proposed a plan that advantaged landowners and disadvantaged the landless—a decision that attests to the power the Bauern had gained within the LPG. Landowners received half the sum they were owed for inventory contributions and unpaid rents. The other half was kept by the LPG or by its legal successor, to be paid out in instalments over a six-year period. At first, the right to hold a maximum of 15 shares, worth DM 5,000 each, was restricted to landowners. The non-landowning members of the cooperative received only relatively modest compensatory payments.

Once the first amendment to the Agricultural Adjustment Act went into effect, assets had to be redistributed according to its specifications. Subsequently, managers complained that they were forced to pay many things twice. Some people were convinced, however, that management withheld funds that should have been distributed among the members. The chief accountant, who retired in 1997, reported that she received abusive and even threatening telephone calls during the process. The relatively large number of lawsuits provides a further index of the high level of conflict. Other former members of the cooperative see matters more philosophically, noting that at least they got something back, while in other cases the LPG was insolvent and cooperative farmers got nothing (Eidson 2001).

Finally, we turn briefly to the restructuring of the enterprise. The official founding of the new cooperative, which united crop and livestock production, took place on 27 June 1991. It was collectively owned by 250 shareholders, but the day-to-day management was delegated to a board of directors. With the founding of the new cooperative farm, the old manager, Hans Egger, retired, and the former head of the LPG for crop production, Jens Kohse, was elected general manager. The first step in restructuring was the shedding of divisions and employees. This involved eliminating non-

agricultural units, which were subsequently transformed into independent corporations, including two construction companies, a fish hatchery, a cafeteria, and a meat-processing plant. Although most of these new non-agricultural corporations eventually went out of business, they did have the positive effect of allowing for a gradual reduction of the cooperative workforce, which declined from 400 in 1990 to 200 in 1993 and 100 in 1995. Despite the bankruptcies, many former members of the socialist cooperative could continue working until they were eligible for early retirement (cf. Neu 1996).

In 2002, the cooperative farm in Stolpen had 35 employees, 7 apprentices, and 166 shareholders. Using new farming equipment bought with subsidised credit, its employees raised wheat, barley, rape seed, and sugar beets, among other crops. The number of milk cows had been reduced from 1,500 to 500, because new technologies increased yields while the EU placed limits on production. Pigs were dropped entirely once the meat processing plant that two former members had founded on the grounds began buying its animals elsewhere. Crops and cattle were important not only for sales but also because of the subsidies and premium payments they brought. As with all other farms in the region, approximately 50% of the annual budget consisted of transfer payments from the EU, which were administered by the state of Saxony (Heitkamp 2001). Finally, in addition to crops and milk, the cooperative had a third product—real estate. The cooperative in Stolpen inherited almost 80 apartments built by the coal mining concern as replacement housing during the GDR era. These apartments, located in communities throughout the region, brought in an estimated 500,000 Euros per year in rents.

Only four former members of the unit of cooperation demanded their land back so that they could re-establish private farms, and the land they removed amounted to fewer than 100 hectares. As is usual in such cases, they did not get back the exact plots their fathers once worked; rather, they were given land of equivalent value on the borders of the area farmed by the cooperative. In addition, they were able to choose from among the cattle in accordance with previous inventory contributions, and in one case a budding dairy farmer was able to secure EU milk quotas from the cooperative.

The four former members who left the cooperative in order to re-establish private farms were among those who had belonged to the LPG only grudgingly and who played no active role in building up the cooperative during the socialist era. As one of these four said with a grin, 'I wasn't a very good cooperative farmer'. He explained that, in the GDR, he had doubled his income by raising bulls and pigs in his private barn, despite the fact that this was discouraged by the LPG management. After the fall of the

Berlin Wall, he left the LPG at the earliest opportunity. At that time, he and the other three departing members joined in a lawsuit against the cooperative over the reimbursement of inventory contributions. By 2002, he and his wife and son had a farm with almost 200 hectares of arable land and 50 milk cows. They used the payment they received from the LPG as start-up capital and took advantage of government programs offering subsidised credit and matching funds for large investments. For the last several years, their dairy farm has been ranked among the best five in all of Saxony. They can now depend upon the help of their grown son, who is responsible for crops. But the father will soon retire, and it is unclear whether the son is willing to continue the dairy operation, in which the most money has been invested but which is also the most labour-intensive part of the farm.

Since 1990, entrepreneurs with businesses of all sizes have been scrambling for land, and none is satisfied. Given the loss of land to coal mining and to the re-established family farms, the cooperative farm's holdings have been reduced from 2,300 to 1,700 hectares. The vast majority of plots are not owned by the cooperative but leased for 12 to 18 years at a time from a number of owners. Since private farmers invariably need far more land than they own, there is fierce competition over leases to privately owned land and over state-owned land offered for sale by two government agencies, the LMBV and the BVVG, a Treuhand successor.[26] Furthermore, many participants in the search for land accuse the others of manipulation. The private farmers who left the cooperative in Stolpen complain that the wife of the current manager, Jens Kohse, works in the County Office for Agriculture, where, they claim, she is able to influence land sales. At the same time, Kohse and his co-workers feel that they need at least 1,000 additional hectares, and they are in such despair of receiving these at home that in 2002 they considered co-financing a venture in Ukraine.

Second Case Study: Western Pomerania

The second case study, carried out by Gordon Milligan, is situated in the federal state of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, a double-barrelled name that unites two regions with very different historical identities.[27] The field site is

[26] The LMBV is the Lausitzer- und Mitteldeutsche Bergbau-Verwaltungsgesellschaft mbH (Lausatian and Central German Mining Adminstration, Inc.), and the BVVG is the Bodenverwertungs- und Verwaltungs GmbH (Corporation for the Administration and Utilisation of Land).

[27] Milligan began fieldwork in Western Pomerania in May 2001 and conducted full-time fieldwork there from October 2001 to October 2002. Methods included participant observation, formal and informal interviews, a survey of 65 households, and research in local archives.

in Vorpommern, the economically weaker half of what is already one of the economically weakest and most rural states in the German federation. The name Pommern, or Pomerania, refers to the south-eastern Baltic Sea coast, spanning Germany and Poland, with the River Oder separating Vorpommern, or Western Pomerania, from Hinterpommern, or Eastern Pomerania. In the GDR, these names were disapproved of, because they seemed to imply revanchist designs on the formerly German territories of the Polish east. Prior to 1945, the city of Stettin was the commercial and industrial centre in Western Pomerania. Since the late nineteenth century, surrounding towns and villages had been linked to this urban centre by a network of railway lines, but these links were torn up after the war when Stettin became the Polish city of Szczecin. The railway network fell victim to a general stripping of the infrastructure under Soviet occupation, with double lines becoming single, and single lines disappearing completely. Villages on the German side of the German-Polish border lost their important regional centre and were forced to reorient themselves westward towards the smaller town of Pasewalk, which in 2002 had approximately 13,000 inhabitants.

Pre-war landownership in the formerly Prussian province of Pomerania was marked by the predominance of the East Elbian Junker estates of which Max Weber (1946) was so critical. These large estates, of several hundred hectares each, dominated the life of one or more villages, the inhabitants of which lived in houses belonging to the estate and worked on the estate in return for a small wage and for payments in kind. Besides the estate villages, there were also villages of independent farmers who owned their own land. In this part of Germany, however, even independent family farms tended to be significantly larger than their counterparts to the south and west—a point sometimes overlooked by those who expected a 'return' to small-scale family farms after 1990. Together, these two forms of landownership formed a patchwork pattern of estate and non-estate land across the region (Brauer, Ernst, and Willisch 1999: 1345). Some villages contained both forms.

The Pomeranian field site includes eight villages, which are now divided between two local administrative units. Three of these villages once belonged to estates, whereas four were dominated by independent farmers with large farms of 40 to 80 or (in one case) more than 100 hectares. One village was newly founded in 1950, and two other smaller estate villages have completely disappeared, leaving hardly a stone. The central village of the study, Jelzow, represents a special case. It had previously been dominated by a single estate of around 800 hectares, which went bankrupt in 1932. Its agricultural land was then divided into separate plots, which were sold to farmers from Eastern Pomerania or Saxony. Most of these new

family farms had 8 to 15 hectares of arable land, but some had up to 30 hectares. Because of this historical peculiarity, land tenure in Jelzow closely resembled the patterns described previously for north-west Saxony. To the north and north-east of Jelzow lay two more estate villages, and to the south and east lay two of the important independent farmers' villages: Folzow, with 60- to 80-hectare farms, and Wendorf, with 40- to 60-hectare farms and a small estate.

Conditions were chaotic in the first years after the Second World War. Refugees arrived in great numbers from the lost German territories to the east, and farm and estate houses alike were filled with a family in every room. Estate owners fled imprisonment or execution, and farmers who had abandoned their homesteads temporarily to avoid the Soviet army returned to find all their stock and machinery gone. In the subsequent land reform, estates and farms of more than 100 hectares were split up, and the land was distributed in parcels of 5 to 8 hectares to the refugees, now 'new farmers', many of whom had little or no previous experience in farming. In the independent farming villages, much depended on exactly how big the individual landholdings were. Whereas farmers with 30 to 50 hectares managed to maintain their independence until forced collectivisation in 1960, those with more than 50 hectares found it impossible to meet their higher production norms and abandoned their farms in the mid-1950s.

Stefan Lindt came from a medium-sized farm in Wendorf. His father had been among those who resisted collectivisation most energetically, but Stefan became a second-generation cooperative farmer in the GDR and re-established the family farm after 1990. When interviewed, Lindt contrasted the situation of two villages in the mid-1950s: his home village of Wendorf, which had both medium-sized farms and small 'new farmer' homesteads, and the neighbouring village of Folzow, which had large independent farms.

> Here [in Wendorf] they had about 30 hectares, and in Folzow there were some who had 60, 70, or even 80 hectares. ... They had problems fulfilling their obligations. ... Those who didn't deliver were locked up or couldn't get enough feed for their animals. But the new farmers here had seven or eight hectares, and they had very small delivery obligations. ... The smart ones got hold of two plots and only had to deliver for one. They made really good money. You wouldn't believe today that it could have been like that. ... In Folzow, most of them took off, but here [in Wendorf] practically nobody left. They always just about got by, more or less.

Lindt's statement provides striking evidence of the way in which the agricultural policy of that era favoured the new farmers and put pressure on the large farmers by demanding higher annual deliveries of farm products from them. It also bears witness to the more favourable situation of the owners of medium-sized farms. Later, members of this intermediary category would play an important role in the development of the socialist cooperatives, and their children would figure prominently in the founding of new enterprises after 1990.

Farmers in Jelzow, where medium-sized farms were established after the bankruptcy of the estate in the early 1930s, also found themselves in a relatively strong position. Because they were experienced farmers, and because the production quotas for farms of this size were manageable, they were successful in the years between the land reform and forced collectivisation. Those who were able to produce over and above the obligatory amounts benefited from the so-called *freie Spitzen*—'free trimmings', or surplus—which could be sold for two to three times state prices.

Even before the Second World War, settlers in Jelzow had entered into cooperative arrangements involving common grain storage facilities and shared harvesting machinery. This may be one of the reasons why the process of collectivisation was less polarised in this village than it was in other villages of the region. In Jelzow, as elsewhere, the surviving independent farmers—those who considered themselves to be the good farmers—preferred to enter the partially collectivised LPG Type I in 1960. Here, however, the fully collectivised LPG Type III, founded in 1954, was also run by people from farming families, rather than by refugees.

A brief consideration of two members of the family Jech illustrates the close social ties between members of the Type I and Type III cooperatives in Jelzow. The Jechs had been an established farming family in Eastern Pomerania, but they were forced to leave their ancestral land when it became the site of a military installation in the 1930s. In Jelzow, they acquired a farm with about 30 hectares of farmland, which was large by village standards. Andreas Jech, a member of the Christian Democratic Union, was one of the founders of a Type I cooperative called 'The Bees', and his uncle became the first chairman of the Type III cooperative, the 'First of May'. Thus, members of local farming families had leading roles in both types of cooperatives, and the continuity of their influence was assured when the Type I cooperative was incorporated into the Type III cooperative. These points may be inferred from Andreas Jech's explanation of the varying success of two villages, Jelzow and Folzow:

> There were many villages where things went well, as with us ... in Jelzow. But in Folzow, things just *never* worked. Folzow was always so far down. ... Why? They had good fields there ... but they didn't come up to speed. I suspect almost that it was a village with Grossbauern [farmers with large farms] who had the say, while the others there were all more or less workers. ... [Then only two of these large farmers] stayed, but the others all left. ... Why didn't it work? ... It's pretty much my opinion that, in Jelzow, things went well because they were all more or less independent farmers ... who could run a business independently. ... They worked after [the war] just as they had before it. No one had to stand behind them, saying, 'You haven't done enough, you have to work harder'. They just worked. ... But elsewhere, there were only workers ... and the boss could do very little. They said, 'Hey, what do you want with us? You can do all that crap by yourself'. Then they went home ... and you couldn't throw them out.

This quotation shows once again what a difference the members of the middle farming families could make. Clearly, however, the representatives of this class did not accomplish everything by themselves. By 1963, the top management position in the LPG Type III in Jelzow had passed from Jech's uncle to a Socialist Unity Party member with no personal connection to the village. This man, Jochen Weiss, had already worked for another agricultural cooperative and for a machine tractor station, but he retained his post as head of the LPG in Jelzow for the next 28 years, up until the formation of the new legal successor in 1990. Upon Weiss's arrival, Jech became head of animal husbandry in the cooperative, and despite great differences of political opinion—Jech was a conservative and Weiss a convinced socialist—the two became close personal friends (who still meet regularly for a Sunday morning pint and a friendly debate). Weiss was well connected in the regional party hierarchy, but he understood himself to be involved in a joint enterprise with the members of the LPG, and he used his influence to further the success of the enterprise. Together, the management and members of the LPG in Jelzow strove to expand their dairy operation and to increase their earnings in the early 1970s, the heyday of the LPG Type III.

During the period of expansion after 1970, as Jech told Milligan, the first problem was to persuade people to put in the long milking hours that became necessary once the cows had been transferred to central stalls. A shift system was conceived as a way of overcoming the initial resistance. People were prepared to work long hours over two or three days, if they knew they would then have one or two days free. Production was further

stimulated when two farmers were convinced to move out of their farmsteads and allow these to be rebuilt as stalls for a much larger number of cows. For the LPG chairman, Weiss, this is an example of how the boss of a good LPG could achieve things, using his connections. Normally, construction required a building permit, which allowed access to building materials and construction workers. Permits, however, were notoriously difficult to obtain. Instead, the work was done on the black market. Workers from the LPG's construction brigade would work at the weekend for higher wages, and through good connections materials could also be procured. Weiss remembers the construction brigade leader meeting him on the street and scolding him about the things they were doing in Jelzow. It was not something the chairman of a less successful LPG or the director of a state farm could have gotten away with.

The development of the LPG was accompanied by dramatic changes in the makeup of the rural population. After most of the original beneficiaries of the land reform of 1945 had renounced their claims to redistributed farmland and migrated to the cities, both Mecklenburg and Western Pomerania experienced a serious shortage of agricultural labour. Workers from the more populous parts of the southern GDR were encouraged to move north by means of special programs. The program entitled Nordlandfahrer (Drivers of the North) was designed to recruit tractor drivers, and the program entitled Industriearbeiter aufs Land (Industrial Workers to the Countryside) provided incentives for urban labourers from the south to take up new jobs in the agricultural north. The new *Plattenbau,* or prefab blocks of flats, which often still stand incongruously among the other farm buildings, were built not in response to the many post-war refugees, who later left, but to attract workers to the villages where the employee shortage was most acute. Villages with more stable populations, such as Jelzow, do not have such buildings.

By the mid-1970s, with the decision to separate animal husbandry and crop production, the 'unit of cooperation' linking the LPG of several neighbouring villages began to take shape. By the end of the decade, the reorganisation of agricultural production in three specialised cooperatives was complete. These three were the LPG for crop production in a former estate village called Hermin, an LPG specialising in pigs in the former farming village of Eberau, and an LPG for dairy production in Jelzow. Here, as elsewhere in the GDR, there was some initial resistance to the separation of crop production and animal husbandry, but in this west Pomeranian field site the cooperation among the specialised parts seems to have functioned more smoothly than it did elsewhere. The head accountant for the whole unit of cooperation was Rolf Müller, who had learned his trade in Pasewalk in the late 1960s. During this period, agricultural policy was controlled less by

the Socialist Unity Party than by farmers (mostly from the Farmers Party) acting in their capacity as members of the Rat für Landwirtschaft, an advisory body for agricultural administration at the county level. Later, when the Socialist Unity Party reasserted its control, reintegrating agricultural policy-making into the Rat des Kreises, or county administration, Müller left to join the LPG in Eberau. In his conversations with Milligan, Müller described the negative effects of the separation of the LPG, which often resulted in conflicts between crop and livestock specialists:

> The crop production ... sold the feed ... and said to the livestock production, so, either you eat that or die. ... But not here. That had to do with the department head [of crop production] as well. ... It lay within our discretion whether we came through for the other LPG or not. The department head—well, there was a problem in these days to get people for livestock production, so he sent some of his people from crop production into the cow sheds.

Determined to counteract the divisiveness of the crop-livestock separation, the unit management initiated a common fund that could be used to channel surpluses from the more successful parts of the unit of cooperation to the less successful parts. Roads, farm buildings, and recreational facilities were built, showing that the joint success of crop and livestock production would lead to common benefits:

> There was no other enterprise in the villages, except for the LPG. ... Whatever was done was done by the LPG. ... The LPG paid [for improvements] using cooperative funds and without [taking out] loans. ... The three enterprises had a common fund, and it would be decided in the council of the unit of cooperation which projects would be paid from there. So, for example, with this common fund, we financed a cattle stall in [a village linked to the LPG for animal husbandry in Eberau].

This sketch of the development of agricultural enterprises in the west Pomeranian field site during the socialist era ends in the late 1980s with the three specialised but interdependent cooperatives, which were run by a combination of delegated functionaries, local farmers, and recruited workers. By the last year of the GDR, the changes in demographic and organisational structures were also linked to an important generational change. We have already introduced some representatives of the various types of LPG members in each generation. In the older generation, Stefan Lindt's father, an independ-

ent farmer, resisted collectivisation and remained bitter over its results, whereas another independent farmer, Andreas Jech, was willing to adapt to the LPG. Jochen Weiss, the LPG chairman in Jelzow, was an outsider and a Socialist Unity Party member, but he used his connections to the advantage of the cooperative and its members. In the younger generation, Stefan Lindt was one of the few who were born into independent farming families but who gained their skills at an agricultural college, not on the family farm. Later, Lindt became a mid-level manager—the 'brigadier' for crop production—within the LPG. His immediate boss was Frank Meiss, a man from a family of landless agricultural workers in Folzow, who was not a party member but who had studied agriculture and worked his way up through the LPG management. In 1990, these people and others, such as Jech's two sons, belonged to the relatively small group that took up the question, 'So, wat noo?'—'Well, what now'?

After the fall of the socialist party state, the unit of cooperation determined the parameters within which agricultural reform took place at the local level. The first step involved the temporary re-creation of three separate LPG in Hermin, Jelzow, and Eberau, each of which reunited crop production and animal husbandry. All members of the enterprises within the unit of cooperation were reassigned to one of these LPG for the purpose of receiving the payments due to them. The process of distributing cooperative assets among the three LPG was administered by Rolf Müller, the chief accountant for the former unit of cooperation as a whole, who also took the lead in creating the formula for individual shares. Responsibility for the actual distribution of assets to former members was held by the legal successors to each LPG.

The village of Jelzow exemplifies the distribution of assets in the whole set of interrelated villages and enterprises. Informants agree that assets were distributed more or less fairly. Andreas Jech likes to remember a meeting in the council of the unit of cooperation, during which he emphatically rejected Müller's initial suggestion to divide the assets equally among all members. 'What!'—Jech recalls himself as being loud but good-natured—'Do you mean that those of us who were here at the beginning with our land and our animals are to get back the same amount as those who came along ten years later with a briefcase under their arm?' Jochen Weiss, the outgoing chairman, saw Jech looking across in his direction: 'What, like me you mean?' 'Yes, just like you', Jech answered.

As a result of this discussion and the subsequent decision of the membership assembly, the formula was adjusted to take account of landowning members' initial inventory contributions to the LPG, the use of privately owned land by the LPG, and contributions to LPG assets through labour.

Thus, Müller anticipated the criteria that would later be formalised in the first amendment to the Agricultural Adjustment Act. Few felt, however, that they had a clear idea of the formula that was used to determine individual shares. Jech claims to have handwritten notes, which he took during the aforementioned meeting, but he was unwilling to show these to Milligan. Only because of his detailed knowledge of management promises and his insistence that they be fulfilled, he says, was he able to negotiate an unusually high compensation payment. Things were complicated, too, by repeated revaluations of assets as the new businesses struggled to establish what they saw as realistic market values for buildings and equipment in a write-off tug-of-war with the tax authorities. Most former LPG members settled for what they got and expected little more, though some are still vaguely waiting for payments they believe they deserve.

The three temporarily reconstituted LPG became the bases for three new successor enterprises, only one of which survived. Both the GmbH, or corporate farm, in Hermin and the new *Genossenschaft,* or cooperative farm, in Eberau were short-lived. Once again, it was in Jelzow that agricultural entrepreneurs were most successful. A group of farmers, including Andreas Jech, suggested to Frank Meiss, the successful department head from the LPG for crop production in Hermin, that he head a successor business in Jelzow. Meiss accepted their proposal, and a corporation was formed with four limited partners: Meiss himself, one of Jech's sons, the son of a Wendorf family, and a farmer's daughter from Folzow who had been one of the LPG's top accountants (and who is now the mayor of Jelzow as well). These four bought out the remaining shareholders in the old LPG and formed a GmbH & Co. Kg, the GmbH (limited corporation) being the legal business entity and the Co. Kg (limited partnership) being the shareholder group. Despite the appearance of having traded upon power and connections from the socialist era, Meiss is still an immensely popular figure, seen as a man who mediates local conflicts while defending local interests against encroachments by outsiders. The new business grew quickly, taking over the failing corporate farm in Hermin and also incorporating a 500-hectare farm in neighbouring Brandenburg. The Jelzow GmbH now cultivates 3,500 hectares of land, combining crop production with dairy and pig farming. The evidence suggests that it is doing quite well within the framework of the Common Agricultural Policy of the European Union.

In addition to the legal successors of the LPG, five further farming enterprises were founded by former members of the LPG in this area. Early in 1990, two groups of *Wiedereinrichter* (local farmers starting up again) approached the LPG accountant, Müller, with their plans. One of these groups included Stefan Lindt and his brother-in-law, both from Wendorf; the

second was made up of three cousins who had inherited land near the village of Eberau. Each of the groups, which formed two separate partnerships (GbR), was allowed to take back the land and livestock that its members' parents or grandparents had brought into the LPG during the socialist era. With few restrictions, they were also able to choose the machinery they needed. Somewhat later, in 1992, three further partnerships were formed by five relatives out of the remains of the failed cooperative farm in the village of Eberau. In the case of all five enterprises, the partners started with approximately 30 to 60 hectares of inherited land, which they subsequently built up, through buying or leasing, to about 300 to 350 hectares. Farmers in this region consider this to be the minimum size for a viable enterprise.

While there is some competition among the various enterprises of this area, including the corporate farm and the five partnerships, relationships are also characterised by a high degree of cooperation. Perhaps this is because a small group of people with similar backgrounds and qualifications were able to divide up available opportunities among themselves. With the exception of Meiss, all are descendants of local farming families, who, like Meiss, attended agricultural colleges in the socialist era before being integrated into the management of the interdependent LPG in the regional unit of cooperation. The disputes that occurred after 1990 were usually among Wiedereinrichter, who competed for land leases or fought over assets which they inherited from common relatives. Although seen as the 'big man' who is able to get away with paying lower land rents and staff wages, Meiss is well liked by the private farmers and has, on occasion, played a mediating role among them.

Those who have now exited the stage include the descendants of remaining 'new farmer' families and the mobile labourers who had been induced to venture into the north country. Representatives of these categories had often had routine jobs as milkers or tractor drivers in the LPG. By 1990, many had reached retirement age, but even those who were younger had neither the skills, the experience, nor the inclination to become agricultural entrepreneurs. Lacking a family tradition and an education in large-scale agriculture, most merely waited to be told what was going to happen next. For most the answer was: not much.

Socialist Entrepreneurs Revisited

Comparison of the Saxon and Pomeranian case studies indicates that the same or similar policies often had variable effects in different regions. For centuries, the southern or south-western parts of what later became known as East Germany were richer, more urban, and more highly developed than were the northern or north-eastern reaches. In the prosperous Duchy of

Saxony, with its capital in Dresden, the legal reforms of the early modern period secured the position of the free peasantry and paved the way for its entry into the emerging market economy (Blaschke 1965). During the same period, Western Pomerania was gradually incorporated into Brandenburg-Prussia, a state in which the landed nobility shared power with the growing central administration. As a consequence, the position of the free peasantry weakened.

These historical preconditions help to explain the varying results of the liberal reforms of the nineteenth century. In Saxony and neighbouring provinces, the emancipation of the peasantry resulted in the establishment of a class of small-scale agricultural entrepreneurs. In the Prussian north, emancipation often worked in favour of estate owners, as many peasants experienced debt, dispossession, and the lure of industrial centres to the south and west (cf. Reif 1994). The industrial boom of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries did not by-pass the rural and sparsely populated north, but it was of greater consequence for the densely settled mixed economy of Saxony (Bramke and Hess 1998).

At the end of the Second World War, both regions had mixed patterns of land tenure, though large estates were predominant in the East Elbian north, whereas small to medium-sized farms were more prevalent in the West Elbian south. Therefore, the post-war land reform (1945–49) had a much more dramatic effect in the north, where more land was confiscated and redistributed among new farmers. This meant that there was greater demographic fluctuation in Western Pomerania than in Saxony, because most new farmers eventually stopped farming and had to be replaced by transient labourers. Still, this difference between the two field sites makes the similarities in subsequent processes of collectivisation all the more apparent. In the absence of estate managers and large farmers, who were expelled or who fled, and given the inconstancy of the new farmers and the indifference of many incoming farmworkers, it was the remaining members of middle peasant families who played a crucial role in the development of the cooperative farms. This was no less true for Western Pomerania, where this class was less strongly represented, than it was in Saxony. In both cases, official policy was aimed at replacing these middle farmers with technocrats and proletarians, but agriculture seems to have been most successful in the LPG where this goal was only partially achieved.

Socialist leaders dubbed the GDR the 'Workers' and Peasants' State', but here, as elsewhere in the Soviet bloc, it was the 'peasants' who posed the greatest difficulties for the politically mandated alliance between these two social classes. The land reform and collectivisation were the earliest phases of the 'class struggle in the countryside', in the context of which new farm-

ers and cooperative farmers were cultivated as clients while estate owners and 'big farmers', or German kulaks, were targeted as enemies. The middle farmers were viewed as an intermediary category that might be led to side with the new farmers in the founding of agricultural cooperatives (Ulbricht 1952: 90–102; cf. Ponomarjow et al. 1960: 496–592). In fact, it was the middle farmers, as a class, who resisted collectivisation most decidedly, holding out until they were faced with the choice of joining or giving up full-time farming.

A portion of the middle farmers did give up their farms rather than join the LPG, and many encouraged their children to seek their fortunes in other branches of the economy (Brauer, Ernst, and Willisch 1999: 1359–61). Insofar as they switched to industrial labour while retaining a family mini-farm, they may be classified, in the terms of Szelényi's classic study *Socialist Entrepreneurs* (1988: 3, 12), as 'rural semi-proletarians', whose entrepreneurial endeavours led them along a path of embourgeoisement. Prior to collectivisation, however, many East German farmers were already thoroughly middle class in both their economic position and their social qualifications. Therefore, those who sought salaried jobs in industry while continuing part-time agricultural production are more accurately classified as members of the rural bourgeoisie.

Still, a significant number of people from middle peasant families decided that it was better to enter the cooperative than to change careers. For many of these farmers, the partially collectivised LPG Type I served as refuge for about a decade. Thereafter, all who remained were channelled into the fully collectivised LPG Type III. Once this happened, they were again faced with a choice. One possibility was to put in one's hours, fulfilling minimal obligations before returning in the evening to one's private plot and investing energy and initiative in private production—which was quite lucrative in the GDR (Eckart 1983; cf. Schier 1997: 44–45). Another possibility was to commit oneself to the common project of the LPG, doing all one could to make a success of it, and in this way increase one's pay and improve one's standard of living (Eidson 1998a: 104–7). Even if one belonged to one of the so-called bloc parties, such as the Farmers Party or the Christian Democratic Union, rather than the Socialist Unity Party, one could still rise to a position in mid-level management and perhaps even higher. Between these two extremes—either being *in* the LPG but not *of* the LPG while concentrating on private production or identifying with the LPG and committing oneself to making it successful—there were, of course, a number of intermediary positions.

For the success of an LPG, the engagement of at least a portion of the middle farmers was crucial, but this was not the only variable. Equally

important were the chairpersons, who were only partially recruited from this class. Often the chairperson of an LPG was an agricultural functionary sent in from outside the community by county authorities. He or she was usually, though not always, a Socialist Unity Party member. Both Jochen Weiss, in the Pomeranian case study, and Hans Egger, in the Saxon case study, were trained agronomists who were sent to struggling LPG from earlier positions in regional lending stations for agricultural machinery. Weiss was a well-connected Socialist Unity Party member, whereas Egger was a Farmers Party member who became closely allied with the local Socialist Unity Party secretary. In neither case did political objectives necessarily take absolute precedence, as some authors have suggested (e.g., Brauer, Ernst, and Willisch 1999: Ł387). Rather, both chairmen used their skills and connections for the benefit of the LPG and its members, including themselves. They did this in alliance with a committed core of cooperative farmers, which included representatives of the local class of middle farmers (cf. Schier 1997: 46). In the next generation of chairpersons and brigadiers, it was not uncommon to reintegrate the sons of local farming families, who had been sent off to study with the explicit purpose of returning to the LPG in a management position.

In short, socialist-era managers were a heterogeneous category that included local insiders and outsiders, Socialist Unity Party members and members of other bloc parties. Some were, no doubt, unimaginative executors of state policy, but others were entrepreneurs who gathered a competent staff in order to pursue their own economic goals within the larger framework of 'the plan'. In both of our case studies, the most successful LPG were run by *Macher,* or 'wheelers and dealers', who sometimes disregarded policy directives and even broke the rules when it suited their purposes and they could get away with it. Though it would be misleading to describe such behaviour as oppositional with respect to the GDR party state, it was certainly heterodox in both its motives and its expressions. The main goal was to run a successful enterprise, and the main reasons for wanting to do so were pride in one's work, a sense of responsibility, and the desire for monetary remuneration and other practical benefits. Clearly, there were some, perhaps many, LPG chairrpersons for whom socialist ideals also played a role, but the most successful ones were first and foremost pragmatists.[28]

[28] Buechler and Buechler (2002: 96–99) draw conclusions about LPG chairpersons that support our interpretation, but they also suggest that the 'identities' of former functionaries may depend in part on their own retrospective constructions. Our safeguard against confusing self-image with public persona was to speak with several people who assessed the former LPG chairpersons from different points of view and thus to create composite characterisations using convergent data.

Our view of the LPG as an enterprise clearly differs from that of some well-known experts on agricultural production in socialist economies. For example, Szelényi and his co-authors found their heroes among the 'rural semi-proletarians', who 'combine work for wages and salaries for the government with part-time family agricultural production' (Szelényi 1988: 3). For these writers, collectivisation represented not a revolution but a new form of feudalism. Hence, they emphasised the similarities between the '*kolkhoz* system' and the 'Junker estates', upon which farmers had been reduced to the status of agricultural labourers (Szelényi 1988: 21). In contrast, we have argued that there was room for entrepreneurship within the kolkhoz itself. Our argument matches Szelényi's insofar as we, too, emphasis the role of members of the middle peasant class in developing forms of entrepreneurship under socialism.

It would be tempting to conclude that the cooperative farms of the socialist era were successful to the degree that they set upon its head the Marxist-Leninist ideology of the alliance between workers and peasants. Rather than assimilating to the behaviour and mentality of the working class, the peasants provided the model for turning the socialist cooperative into an enterprise. This is the gist of our analysis, and the central LPG in our two case studies provide evidence in support of a strong formulation of this thesis. In the Pomeranian case study, Frank Meiss, who started out as an agricultural labourer, rose to a leadership position precisely because he adapted to the standards of the entrepreneurial farming class. Still, the issue of entrepreneurship in the socialist cooperatives of East Germany is better viewed as a matter of 'more or less' than a matter of 'either-or'. Socialist policymakers did rid East Germany of estate owners and large farmers, and they were successful in the partial dissolution of the middle peasant class, the members of which either left agriculture for industry or stayed in agriculture to become cooperative farm managers or farm workers.

For those who stayed in agriculture, the question is, What did they make of their situation? In a somewhat weaker formulation of our thesis, we still conclude that socialist-era managers and workers drew upon their middle peasant heritage or upon middle peasant models in their efforts to remain or become agricultural entrepreneurs. We differ from Szelényi, not in rejecting his thesis entirely but in insisting that his distinction between 'proletarianisation' and 'embourgeoisement' corresponded not only to differences between the kolkhoz and private production but also to various possibilities and developments within the kolkhoz itself. Clearly, circumstances differed from one LPG to the next and over time as well. In both case studies, our informants distinguished between 'strong' and 'weak' LPG or between LPG where 'things worked' and where they did not. Furthermore, our informants

were unanimous in identifying the era before the separation of crop production and animal husbandry, which was forced upon the agrarian sector during the 1970s, as the high point of freewheeling entrepreneurship in the LPG. In contrast, the 1980s were a decade in which the socialist entrepreneurs in the cooperative farms struggled to realise their goals with greater or lesser success. It would be rash, however, to conclude on this basis that there were no more Bauern in the specialised divisions or cooperatives for crop production (cf. Brauer, Ernst, and Willisch 1999: 1382).

The choices that actors made during the socialist era had implications for their attitudes and behaviours after 1990. Those who identified with the LPG prior to 1990, viewing it as their 'life work', usually favoured its continued existence, whether or not they retained their jobs. This group also includes those who were more likely to leave a portion of their assets in the new enterprise after retirement, provided, of course, that it was a cooperative. Their reasons for doing so seem to combine emotional and practical factors. On the one hand, these people do not want to feel that their efforts in the years before 1990 were 'all for naught'. On the other, they are often convinced—not without good reason—that they might have a greater chance of maximising the value of their assets if they leave some of them in the cooperative rather than remove them all at once.[29]

In the years since 1990, the most vocal critics of the successor enterprises have included, first, the heirs of land reform victims and, second, those who either refused to join the LPG or joined but never identified with it, preferring to pursue their own projects outside its bounds. The first group of critics is more important for the Pomeranian case study, where large estates were dominant prior to 1945. Its spokespersons, however, have been rendered powerless (though perhaps only temporarily) by the terms of the Unification Treaty and subsequent court rulings. This, together with the relatively small number of landowning middle farmers and the relatively large number of landless rural labourers, helps to explain the low level of conflict during the distribution of assets in the Pomeranian field site.

The second group of critics is more important for the Saxon case study, where the landowning middle farmers were more numerous and, after 1990, competed more fiercely for scarce resources. It was these critics who removed their assets from the LPG or its successor at the earliest possible time. Some re-established their own private farms, even if they were near retirement. Even those who did not go back to private farming were inclined to feel that they were entitled to a maximum share of LPG assets. Presumably, satisfaction of their wishes would have required the liquidation of the

[29] This judgement depends, of course, on their estimation of the enterprise's chances for success.

LPG. Not surprisingly, those who view the matter from this perspective not only question the legitimacy of the successor enterprises but also accuse their managers of holding back assets for their own benefit.

The critics of the LPG and their successor enterprises are organised in politically active interest groups whose spokespersons are largely responsible for articulating a critique of the so-called red barons.[30] In transforming the old LPG to new cooperative or corporate farms, they argue, the socialist-era managers were able to secure positions at the heads of huge enterprises by taking advantage of inside information and personal connections. In this way, they furthered their own interests while disregarding the interests of those who had already suffered under socialism. Such views of roguish and opportunistic socialist functionaries correspond to popular conceptions of *Seilschaften,* or clandestine socialist-era networks, which have figured prominently in public reflection upon the GDR and its legacy since 1990 (Booss 1999). They have been propagated in news reports and editorials, as, for example, in the popular news magazine *Der Spiegel* (1995, 1997).

We are not prepared to reject reports concerning the self-interested behaviour of former LPG chairpersons out of hand. Indeed, we find it plausible that, in the process of privatisation, a certain percentage of cases were characterised by corruption. Simultaneously, we see no reason to assume that this was more often the case in agriculture than in other sectors of the economy. We have no doubt that many participants in the reform of the agrarian sector acted in good faith, or at least no less so than others would have under similar circumstances. Finally, it must be noted that both the state and the courts have exercised important control functions in the privatisation of the LPG (Jähnichen 1998: 22–24; Laschewski 1998: 61–62). This means that the discourse about red barons cannot always be taken at face value.

The term 'red baron' can be rendered more comprehensible if we consider it in broader discursive contexts. In the current era, for example, this term may be viewed as one aspect of a larger public discussion about the character and value of a whole range of categories corresponding, if only schematically, to the great conflict of the second half of the twentieth century. These categories, which usually come in pairs, include 'socialism' or 'communism' and 'capitalism', 'dictatorship' and 'democracy', 'planned economies' and 'market economies', and 'East' and 'West', to name only a few. A full analysis of the term 'red baron' in this context would lead us into complex issues in historical semantics. But even a moment's reflection allows us to conclude that it implies an unconditional rejection of everything

[30] See, for example, the website of the Bundesverband deutscher Landwirte (Federal Association of German Farmers): www.deutsche-landwirte.de.

associated with socialism and its presumably 'eastern' origins or affinities.[31] Not surprisingly many East Germans are unwilling to make this judgement.

In the East German countryside, people frequently refer to the LPG successors with pride, claiming that the east, with its industrial agriculture, is ahead of the west, with its family farms. Some of those who make such statements were supporters of and remain apologists for the fallen socialist regime, but this is not always the case. There are many East Germans who are critical of the socialist party state but who still spent most of their lives in the GDR and believe that they and their fellow citizens deserve some credit for lasting accomplishments. This widespread attitude may be summarised with an oft-heard statement, as simple as it is self-evident: 'Well, not *everything* was bad'. In terms of the framework we have offered, those who are most likely to agree with this statement are those who remained in the LPG and decided to make the best of it once they felt that they had no other choice. These former cooperative farmers often view the successor enterprises as lasting achievements of the socialist era, even if they or their parents initially rejected the political prerequisites of those achievements. From their perspective, the current managers are not red barons but entrepreneurs who are intent upon salvaging and building upon the accomplishments of past decades.

It is not our intention to decide who is 'right' about the LPG and their successor enterprises. After all, such judgements are expressions of the variable social origins and biographies of the actors in question. We do insist, however, that LPG managers and 'red barons' be viewed, along with semi-proletarians and re-establishers, as members of the larger category of socialist and postsocialist entrepreneurs (Lampland 2002). Being successful under socialism is no guarantee of success in the postsocialist era. This, too, depends upon a whole series of factors, among which family background and life history are not necessarily decisive. Nevertheless, acknowledging the status of socialist and postsocialist farm managers as entrepreneurs is a prerequisite for recognising the models underlying the structural transformation of farming enterprises. And those models represent at least one important factor in determining the results of the transformation. In some cases, the re-established family farms of the 1990s might be seen as attempts to recreate the conditions of the 1950s, just as the new cooperatives might be seen as attempts to return to the LPG Type III of the early 1970s. In other cases, today's agricultural entrepreneurs have taken the conditions they inherited at the end of the socialist era as points of departure in an attempt to

[31] See Bauerkämper 2002: 217–18. Abrahams (1996: 4–5) points out that the term 'red baron' was used in Estonia during the Soviet period to refer to state and collective farm leaders and to imply that feudal estates and collective farms were similar.

create new kinds of enterprises, such as partnerships and corporations. All of these models play a role, sometimes in combination, as today's agricultural entrepreneurs attempt to adjust to the changing conditions of the world market, German politics, and EU agrarian policy.

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Chapter 3

Trust and Property in Historical Perspective Villagers and the Agricultural Cooperative in Királyfa, Southern Slovakia

Davide Torsello

The postsocialist transformation that has involved one-half of the European continent has been described as complex, contradictory, and many-sided.[1] The restoration of private property rights and full legal entitlements to economic assets has constituted one of the primary steps in the postsocialist governments' policies of transformation. Because the process of restitution has involved all sectors of society in which property had been collectivised—from state farms and agricultural cooperatives to industries and banks—the re-establishment of property rights may be considered one of the most important steps of postsocialism (Grabher and Stark 1997). By mapping local responses to decollectivisation and restitution of assets, one can build a precise frame for understanding some features of the postsocialist transformation.

In this chapter, I address the historical changes that have characterised relations between landowners and one institution, the agricultural cooperative, in Királyfa, a village in southern Slovakia. My analysis of changing property relations finds that the restructured postsocialist cooperative has achieved a stronger and more solid role in Királyfa's economy than it had during the second half of the socialist period. This is partly a result of the political and economic transformation of Slovakia, which, after 1992, implemented large-scale decollectivisation and reforms aimed at restoring private property. In addition, because the cooperative depends on landowners for the land it cultivates but does not own, its present role is strongly determined by the trust that villagers (owners) have in the institution.

I use the idea of trust to analyse interaction between local actors and formal institutions in postsocialist societies. It is widely believed that the socialist system lacked any base of social trust, because it imposed suspicion

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[1] See Hann, ed. 2002 for a comprehensive survey.

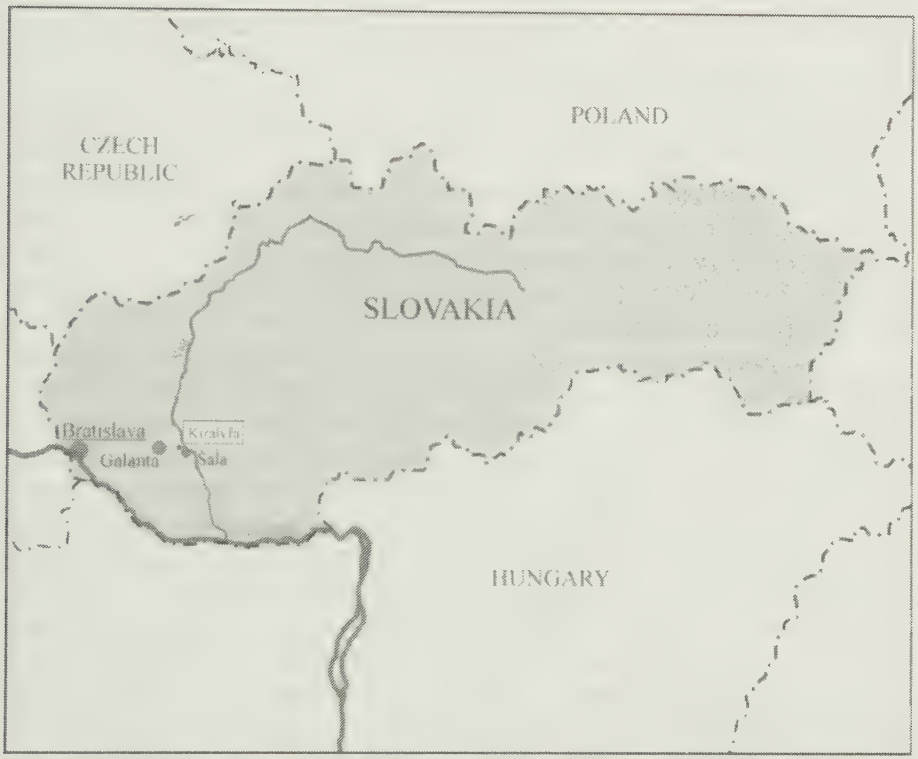
and unreliability on people who lived in a constant state of distrust towards state institutions (Sztompka 1999). Because the distinction between the private and public spheres was overemphasised, the socialist regime created a situation in which public behaviour and ideals were dichotomously constructed in the process of everyday action, constituting an open denial of privately held ideas (Rose-Ackermann 2001). According to this line of argument, the outcomes of the post-1989 transformation resemble what Edward Banfield (1958) termed 'amoral familism' in reference to a southern Italian rural community of the post-war period. The main thread of Banfield's argument (and later that of Robert Putnam [1993]) was that the mistrust so widespread in southern Italian society affected two levels of social interaction: that between persons and that between persons and institutions. Because people generally tend to give priority to personal and familial interests over collective ones, human relationships in this context are dominated by suspicion, envy, and fear of personal damage. The same utilitarian discourse applies to institutions. In a context where corruption and clientelism determine the way in which people approach institutions, little space is left for civic action and social trust. Like southern Italy, part of the European postsocialist world is thus held to have experienced the diffusion of a general sense of mistrust in formal and state institutions, a weak predisposition towards collective action, and hence low levels of economic development (Misztal 1998, 2001; Rose-Ackermann 2001; Sztompka 1999).

In order to apply the notion of trust to some features of the post-1989 transformation, I propose to adopt, within a historical methodology, the distinction between what in Italian is called *fede pubblica* (public trust) and what is called *fede privata* (private trust) (Pagden 1988: 131, citing Genovesi 1803: 94). Analyses based on the Banfield model superficially overplay the public role of trust, offering little or no treatment of how private trust works to tie individuals and institutions to each other or how the two types of trust may complement each other in the course of time. In the first half of the chapter I stress the historical dimension. I examine the stages in the establishment of the socialist cooperative in relation to villagers' present ideas about them, and the changes the cooperative brought about in the community. In the second half I deal with the postsocialist period, looking at the present role of the cooperative and the ideas and practices of local people.

The Village

The village of Királyfa is situated in the south-western part of Slovakia, in the fertile and largely agricultural region of the Danubian lowland (see Map). It lies on the western bank of the Váh River, only four kilometres from the present county centre of Šala. The village is inhabited by 1,531

persons, 723 of whom are economically active. The population is 83.1% ethnic Hungarian, 15.5% Slovak, and 1.4% other ethnic composition (Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic 2001).



Land and animal property in the village constituted the fundamental prerequisites for social status and power among Hungarian peasants during the presocialist period (Fél and Hofer 1969, 1973). Királyfa's feudal land tenure system was characterised by the absence of noble families residing in the community and by a high degree of fragmentation of plots. The feudal social structure was composed of four layers. Middle and large peasants (*gazdák*)—from 5 to 10 families between the mid-eighteenth century and the early twentieth century—worked plots of 4 to 16 hectares and constituted the social and economic village authority. Small peasants (*jobbágyok* or *kisgazdák*), the majority, on average lived on fewer than 2 hectares of arable land. Landless peasants (*zsellérek*) worked on the land of local manorial estates and occasionally for the gazdák of the village. Craftsmen (*mesteremberek*)

were at the bottom, even though they often enjoyed better economic conditions than landless peasants.

In 1918, after the dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy, Királyfa became part of the newly founded Czechoslovak Republic, to which it belonged throughout the socialist period (with the exception of the Second World War interval, when Hungary occupied part of southern Slovak territory, including the village's region). In 1950, socialist collectivisation began throughout Czechoslovak territory, and the process continued steadily until the end of the decade, encountering fierce resistance from village peasants. In Királyfa, it was only in 1960 that the socialist cooperative was able to begin farming all the village land. In 1973, a merger with four neighbouring cooperatives gave rise to a new management board, now based in the town of Šala. The future of the institution became more closely tied to that of the town and district (Galanta) administration, and Királyfa lost its community-based agricultural organisation.

The 1960s constituted a dynamic period for the region. Steady industrialisation and urbanisation brought in vast inflows of workers from the middle Slovakian countryside. Many Királyfa villagers found employment in the local factory as well as in other industrial centres in the capital, Bratislava, 46 kilometres away. The outcome was that, by the end of the 1970s, only a minor portion of village inhabitants worked in agriculture (12.2% in 1970; Praha Federálni Štatistický Úrad 1971–72), and the cooperative lost part of its important role as a major employer in the community.

In 1992, Királyfa's cooperative underwent full restructuring, accompanied by compensation and the restitution of ownership assets. Today this institution farms about 60% of the village's arable land, which is all in private property. It rents out minor portions of this land to villagers who do not own enough land or who want to expand their farms.

Socialist Collectivisation: Three Phases

Socialist collectivisation took place in Királyfa in three phases, which I call the initial phase (1949–61), the village phase (1962–72), and the town phase (1973–91). Landed property remained formally private throughout the socialist period; it was use rights in land that were transferred to the cooperative.[2] Because collectivisation was a process, each period was marked by different economic and social achievements of the institution in the village. Correspondingly, each period was characterised by different levels of trust in

[2] Owners maintained records of their holdings at least until the early 1960s but lost interest thereafter. Records of confiscated animals and machinery were maintained by the cooperative, though in some cases these documents were lost.

the cooperative and different ways of constructing that trust. Both depended on the kind of interaction villagers had with the cooperative, on its social and economic role in the community, and on individual relationships between workers, owners, and members.

The Initial Phase, 1949–1961

The first socialist agricultural cooperative (JRD) was established in Királyfa through a slow and thorny process. In August 1949, the Communist Party members of the village met and proposed such a cooperative. Land was acquired from the village's common property and the church estate, and the cooperative's founders contributed some small plots, for a total of 43 hectares. Available machines included a tractor, two watering plants, and three threshers; livestock consisted of four horses. But the cooperative struggled, and because of the peasants' unwillingness to contribute their land, it was dissolved at the end of the year.

In March 1950, a village meeting was held to re-propose the organisation. Its founders asked the attending peasants to contribute their land to form the cooperative and join it as members. Again their response was negative: the peasants all stood up and left the meeting.

Today, informants express their understanding of the initial opposition to the cooperative in terms of doubt that collective action could work. Antal (b. 1927), a present-day cooperative member, said, 'We knew what kolkhozes were like; the very word "collective" inspired terror in the peasant. Land and work and even meals together! How could we accept such a change?' Moreover, the early period of collectivisation today evokes memories of fear, violence, conspiracy, and disguise, all elements that characterised the manner in which use rights in land and animals were transferred from their private owners to the collective.[3] Even though few people in Királyfa owned comparatively large estates, collectivisation was painful for both large and small landowners. For the former, it was a matter of losing their social and economic status, which depended upon the ownership of land and animals. For the latter, collectivisation was initially interpreted as a deprivation of resources, which, although scanty, could always procure a relative degree of security.

Despite the outspoken opposition of farming families in the village, the small cooperative, which had been re-established in June 1950 with approximately the same amount of land as the first cooperative, slowly

[3] Villagers were allowed to keep for themselves only tools (no machines were allowed in private use), one cow, up to six chickens, and one duck. No limits were set for animals such as rabbits and goats, whereas the ownership of pigs was sharply restricted.

expanded. By December 1950, the number of members and workers had reached 32, and landholdings had increased to 134 hectares, of which 15 hectares belonged to founding members. The remaining 119 hectares had been acquired from non-members of the cooperative through expropriation or forcible persuasion. The early 1950s are remembered as a dark period in the village's history, a time when extreme means were adopted in order to induce peasants to join collectivisation. Among the numerous ways in which informants recollected these dramatic moments in the village's history, the most recurrent memories concerned physical violence and psychological terror. Peasants reluctant to transfer their land were in some cases beaten and punished severely until their signatures had been added to the cooperative register.

The most fruitful strategy for accomplishing collectivisation, however, was undoubtedly the imposition of a compulsory tax on agricultural products, a tax known as *kontingens*. Although oriented to the long term, the power of this measure was clear as peasants became increasingly choked under the heavy burden of taxation.

In 1955 there were still 147 hectares of non-collectivised land in Királyfa, distributed among 63 owners (Galanta District 1955). The cooperative sought to accomplish total collectivisation by enforcing the taxation system. Because the tax was levied in proportion to the size of a privately farmed plot, large owners were hit most heavily by the measure. Their taxes sometimes equalled their level of household production. At the same time, small and micro-owners became an insignificant category of production, because the cooperative's increased landholdings and annual output meant there was no market for privately grown products.

Collectivisation was completed in 1959, following a state decree requiring that use rights in all land had to be transferred to cooperatives by the end of the year. The accomplishment of collectivisation meant the end of the pre-socialist power structure founded on land and animal ownership. As Viktor (b. 1929), the descendant of a *gazda* in Királyfa, commented: 'The village turned upside down, and we found ourselves at the bottom'. Those who had traditionally been at the bottom of the social hierarchy were for the first time given the opportunity to obtain a monthly salary. András (b. 1930), a cooperative member whose father had worked at the railway and owned no land and whose mother had been a nanny, considered the foundation of the cooperative an important step for the economic development of the village. He underlined how 'there came the time for the proletarians to have the opportunity to make their voices heard, and this was done for the sake of the whole community'.

The Village Phase, 1962–1973

The village phase of the Királyfa aricultural cooperative effectively opened with the introduction of a social programme for all cooperatives adopted by the Czechoslovak state in 1962. It included replacing the work unit payment system with a standardised wage and introducing pensions, social benefits for workers, a shop for members, and a canteen facility.[4] In Királyfa, the cooperative's village-level cultural and leisure role was enhanced by its sponsoring of public events such as balls, sport activities, festivals, and theatre performances.[5] Slowly, the cooperative achieved a 'village face' as it successfully compensated for the bitter memories of the preceding phase with increasingly positive economic performance and the social services provided to members.

The diversification of production undertaken in the 1960s provided the Királyfa JRD with incentives for development. While the proportion of staple production was reduced, attention was paid to animal husbandry and dairy farming, thanks to convenient retail channels that linked the cooperative and the Galanta-based Milex, one of the largest milk- and dairy-producing factories in western Slovakia. Tobacco came to play an important role, too, as contracts were negotiated with a Moravian cigarette company that found the southern Slovak climate perfectly suited to tobacco production. In the early 1960s a tobacco drying plant was built in proximity to the JRD, and it operated at a profit for nearly two decades, until competition with another Slovak company dimmed interest in this product. The tobacco project is remembered with pride by villagers as a moment of collective work, especially for women, who worked in shifts in numbers exceeding 30 throughout the harvest period. In spite of the initial reluctance to work 'collectively', the idea of bringing together female workers and providing sources for extra income lured villagers, who today emphasise the hard work behind tobacco cultivation and processing in comparison with pre-socialist agriculture.

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[4] Each type of work had its unit value, which specified the amount of activity to be completed in one day and included calculations of physical difficulty and skill (Lampland 1995: 219).

[5] In 1963 the biggest cultural event organised by the Királyfa agricultural cooperative—a wine festival—took place. It included a procession with traditional peasant costumes, tools, and animals, alongside the first tractors and cooperative machines, later followed by balls, a barbecue, and free distribution of wine. The event attracted the participation of many villagers, and afterwards it became customary to hold an annual wine ball, followed by an autumn ball and a St. Stephan's celebration. More events included theatre performances, the institution of a village choir, and the sponsoring of two football teams. All of this was done through cooperative support.

In the same period the JRD introduced the system of the 'membership plot' (*tag föld*), according to which every member had the right to a small plot for domestic use and to some animals, generally two pigs, one goat, five or six rabbits, and eight chickens.[6] The average size of the plot was half a hectare, but there were cases in which personal position within the cooperative could get one a larger portion of land. Antal, who worked as an accountant in the JRD, remembers raising eight pigs in his courtyard in the 1960s. He received grain from the cooperative as payment in kind (*naturália*), and he managed to put together some plots and have them worked with the JRD's machines and its chemical fertilisers. At the end of the year, he could easily sell the meat from the pigs to local butchers for cash, which he later invested in building a new house.

Gardening was introduced as part of the JRD's productive strategies in the first half of the 1960s. Because there was no tradition of vegetable production in Királyfa, external expertise was required.[7] The cooperative, in partnership with the State Agricultural School situated outside the village on the road to the town of Šala, developed a gardening section under the leadership of a Bulgarian agronomist who had been living in Slovakia since the late 1950s. Again, women were at the forefront in learning the skills of vegetable farming and gardening and eventually importing those skills to their villages. Anna (b. 1932) was one of the most active women in the village. After two years of training she was elected trainer at the Agricultural School with the task of teaching cooperative workers from the surrounding villages. She described in generous detail how her task proved important for both her household and the village economy, since gardening was new to most of the villagers. In her words, 'We had only planted some carrots and potatoes in our gardens before; now we got to know how to do things seriously'.

In 1962 the JRD allotted 18 hectares of village land to vegetable farming. This land lay along the river, in a location that previously had been considered unfavourable for any type of cultivation because of its proximity to the river and its sandy soil. However, villagers learned that sandy soils were suitable for some products, such as paprika, cucumbers, and tomatoes, and the possibility of undertaking new cultivation techniques soon attracted local residents. Meanwhile, the cooperative enlarged its productive sphere

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[6] As in Czechoslovakia, so in Hungary the practice of allotting household plots (*háztáji*) to cooperative members was an important feature of collectivization. It permitted the often harmonious coexistence of a private and a collective farming sector (Hann 1980; Vasary 1987).

[7] In this instance, Királyfa differed from the larger neighbouring communities of Pered, Cigárd, and Nedyed, where in pre-socialist times vegetable farming was practiced on a larger scale (see Danterová 2003).

and reached highly satisfactory economic levels. In 1966, among the 36 cooperatives of Galanta District, the Királyfa JRD was rated fourth in economic performance and plan fulfilment. This result, as one informant commented, was an expression of the renewed role of the cooperative, which became an institution 'working for its village'.

During this phase, the JRD served as a channel through which novelty and knowledge could be transmitted to villagers. Like the membership plots, the promotion of gardening proved to be one of the JRD's most successful measures in improving its performance and winning the villagers over. Gerald Creed (1998), in his study of a Bulgarian rural community, underlined how the cooperative there came to be accepted by villagers as soon as they realised that working together offered advantages and, conversely, that not joining would lead to isolation. In Királyfa the process of 'familiarisation' with the JRD was slower because of several factors, including the resistance of large landholders to collectivisation, the villagers' strong attachment to the land, the solid nexus between property and social status, the type and structure of farming, and, not least, the tragic personal experiences that collectivisation had entailed.

During this phase the cooperative succeeded in establishing the foundations of its role in the community, thanks to its ability to fulfil many of Királyfa's social and economic needs. However, stating that the level of public trust in the consolidated socialist cooperative increased only because of its improved economic performance would underplay the importance of some of the personalities who led the institution. In the early 1950s, the villagers who owned comparatively scarce means of production became the most vocal in advocating the turn to collectivisation. Even though they were formally granted power and the means to exercise it, they had always been poor peasants or craftsmen, and they did not enjoy great credibility with the other villagers. Conversely, those who owned the means of production and had been able to transmit these through generations, as well as to maintain their prestige in the village, were forced to step back. After the first three years of collectivisation, changes in the cooperative's managerial structure contributed to making the institution more acceptable to the whole community. The presence of members of the traditionally highly esteemed gazda group on the JRD's management board lent the cooperative credibility among villagers, owing to the spread of personal trust between the cooperative's leaders and the community.

Királyfa's JRD had four directors. The first, Imre (1949–52) was, according to Antal, 'a real communist, but not a son of a rich peasant'. This would explain why, in the informant's view, Imre was unable to convince people of the positive aspects of the collective enterprise. He lacked the

skills to manage the land, and everyone was aware of this. The second director, Gyula, was a son of a gazda family with more than eight hectares of land. Although his chairmanship, starting in 1952, was stained by violence and oppressive means of achieving collectivisation, he was not considered personally responsible for these acts, which damaged his own family, too. Gyula was believed to have been a good director who did his best to improve the precarious initial conditions of the cooperative. A similar consideration applies to Vendel, the third director (1957–62). A descendant of a large landowning family, he apparently joined the institution voluntarily, on the strength of 'progressive' views about the importance of collectivism. The last director, Csaba, appointed in 1962, was the first not to be from the village. His appointment was interpreted as a political measure intended to strengthen local political control of the JRD.[8] Csaba is a problematic figure; he was never esteemed for his agricultural expertise, but he promoted the development of the JRD through his extensive business networks in the region. He epitomised the historical change from the power of the village gazda to domination by the socialist cadres' elite.

Some villagers recall today that the Királyfa cooperative began to improve in the 1960s because it was able to combine good economic results with attention to the community's needs. As it became a symbol of Királyfa's social and economic development, the institution's efforts to gain trust in the community were successful. As András described it: 'Our JRD reached very high production levels in the 1960s; we had one of the best cooperatives in the region. Land is good here, and with the help of machines and fertilisers things could be done quite smoothly. People were finally happy to work for the cooperative; the result of their efforts was visible every day. This lasted until we were allowed to go our own way'.

The village phase saw a gradual shift away from the strong opposition to collectivisation that had characterised the initial phase and towards acceptance and recognition of the cooperative's function in the community. Although it is difficult to know what opinion villagers had of the institution at the time, the fact that many of them, looking back, evaluate the institution positively suggests that villagers today make clear distinctions between their attitudes towards the JRD in each of these phases.

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[8] In 1962 the local administration (municipal office) took managerial control of the cooperative. Today some informants interpret this move as the preparatory step towards incorporating the cooperative into the town institution. Other villagers point out that Csaba's predecessor had become too weak a figure in the course of his office and that the cooperative had been already under the control of the municipal office since his appointment.

The Town Phase, 1973–1991

Following the general trend in all the socialist countries to form larger and more centralised units (Swain 2000: 4), the reorganisation of Királyfa's JRD was decided with an act issued by the Bratislava Municipal Jury in January 1973. The village cooperative was incorporated under the Šala cooperative (Šala Družba), which now included the JRDs of three villages, Királyfa, Veče, and Dl'há nad Váhom, and that of the town of Šala itself. The four units brought together a total of more than 3,900 hectares of cultivable land and 960 members and workers.

The idea of creating this mammoth cooperative was explained in terms of 'adjusting the existing productive structure to the new demands for rationalisation of production and increased use of machinery and technological innovation' (Vágkirályfa Municipality 1987: 95). It was conceived as a necessary measure in order to cope with social and economic change, to follow closely the latest technological progress, and, in the form it assumed, to take a step towards the resolution of existing economic problems within the local cooperatives. Antal commented:

> I do not think we needed such a giant JRD; at least in our village we were scoring quite well, but in other places situations were different. The upper entities were asked to level the JRDs' performances, and unfortunately the point was to adapt the stronger to the weaker. By this I do not mean that we became weaker after the consolidation, only that decision-making processes and social measures became external to the village. We had less say in several matters; this is what really changed, but production did not diminish. It was in this period that we reached our highest levels.

Other, less cautious comments by villagers stressed the political implications that unification held for the cooperative leadership, maintaining that, in András's words, 'the decision to reorganise was also the fruit of political games taking place at higher levels', and 'it was necessary to have a better grip on village-level institutions by controlling them through central administrative systems'.

After 1973, the members of the Királyfa JRD were transferred automatically to the new institution, and the structures remaining in the village were meant to give employment to 30 to 50 workers.[9] No workers from the village, except for a few skilled labourers such as tractor drivers, were re-

[9] These structures today include two pen complexes for pigs, one for cows, a storage facility for fodder, a machinery park, and an office.

quired to work on the other villages' land, since each former JRD had more or less maintained its own workforce. Before describing the changes introduced by the new management board, it is necessary to introduce the general picture of transformation that characterised the country in this period.

As part of a general trend in east-central Europe, in Czechoslovakia the industrial sector developed in parallel with the consolidation of collective agriculture (Haller, Kolosi, and Róbert 1990: 160). The reorganisation of the socialist cooperatives undertaken towards the end of the 1960s was intended as a decisive step towards the de-peasantisation of rural society. This was true particularly for Slovakia, where industrialisation had a more dramatic impact than it did in Bohemia, which had a solid tradition of pre-socialist industry. Substantial changes took place in the structure of Slovak society, among them the creation of a number of industrial towns, massive internal migration from the poorest mountain regions of central and northern Slovakia to these industrial poles, a transformation of the ethnic boundary with the Hungarian-speaking regions, the transformation from the 'peasant' to the 'peasant-worker' mode of production, and a reshuffling of the local class structure.

During the town phase, the Šala cooperative steadily increased its production levels. This was possible because of generous state subsidies, the high revenues that derived from the institution's 'side activities' (*melleklés*) in partnership with the local industrial plants, the increased use of machinery—the Russian combines widespread in the 1960s were replaced in the mid-1970s by combines of Czech and East German manufacture—the availability of cheap fertilisers produced in the local town, the rationalisation of production with a primary focus on staples, husbandry, and milk products, and the expansion of the arable surface brought about by the unification of the cooperatives. This last factor is important for understanding the changing role of the cooperative after its shift from a village to a town institution in 1973. Although it is clear that high-level mechanisation and productivity increased with the availability of more land, one must consider that of the four cooperatives involved in the unification, two—Šala and Veče—had performed poorly in the previous period. Hence they brought with them a conspicuous sum of debts and called for expenditures to improve their structures. This is one of the reasons informants today are critical of the forced merger of 1973.

The changing relations between members and workers of the cooperative and its new managing board were also a function of the scant personal trust villagers placed in the town cooperative's chairman. Igor was the leading figure of the unified JRD. He arrived in Šala in 1970, coming from a middle Slovakian industrial town. He was an active party member, and

villagers interpreted his appointment as cooperative chairman as a party manoeuvre to gain better control of the institution. Igor, being Slovak with no knowledge of the Hungarian language, was viewed sceptically by local villagers; many pointed out that he had 'two different eyes', one for Slovaks and another for Hungarians. He backed the decision to concentrate the animal husbandry section in the town, depriving the villages of their own cattle, in spite of the communities' strong opposition. His steps towards rationalisation of the collective included elimination of the vegetable gardening sector as well as of the tobacco plant, reduction of the pasture plots and concentration of production on staples, dairy products, and pigs. Even though clearly dictated by an attempt to modernise the cooperative structure, these steps are all interpreted today as attempts to curtail the productive capacity of the villages and to concentrate it in the town. One informant, Gábor (b. 1951), recalled:

> He was good at business, but very ignorant in farming. Imagine—he decided to cut all the nice meadows on which our cows were free to pasture at the time of the village cooperative. He instead put them into a closed stable; the animals did not see the light anymore. And then, to make cleaning procedures faster, he put cement under their legs. You know how many cows fell down and broke their legs in that period?

The lower level of trust that villagers express when referring to the town cooperative can also be understood as a product of the increased distance between the village and the new institution. Not only was some production removed from the village, but also the number of cultural events that had characterised the previous phase suddenly decreased. The sports club and the theatre group remained in Királyfa, but no public events were sponsored in the community anymore. The town became the centre for those initiatives, which were thus depersonalised and reduced to mere celebratory events for a restricted circle of members.[10] The social services that the local cooperative had provided to working villagers also became less attractive, because fewer were now employed in agriculture. For some, the cooperative had been an important launchpad for getting jobs in the local industrial sector, but during the late 1970s and the early 1980s there was no need for this. The ongoing

[10] András, who regularly attended the annual cooperative harvest festival, lamented: 'It was no longer worth participating. The festival served as a moment for networking and disseminating party ideology. It lost any connotation of an event for the workers; no wonder participation declined steadily, and in the end there were only party officials and JRD members from the management board who attended'.

industrialisation of the region (and of the country) opened up other options for employment, which further contributed to diminishing the JRD's social function in the community.[11]

The second half of the 1980s saw a slight change in the relationship between the village and the cooperative. The last years of the socialist regime were marked in Slovakia by a relaxation of state control and ideological pressure, although not on the same scale as that which took place in Hungary (see Hann 1993; Szelényi 1988). Local practices that can be ascribed to the 'second', or informal, economy and that had roots in the 1950s membership-plot system became widespread, especially in the rural districts of southern Slovakia. It was not uncommon to see villagers selling their products, mainly paprika and vegetables, from improvised kiosks along the main traffic routes, and the number of greenhouses in the villages grew rapidly. Local authorities often turned a blind eye to these practices, and personal acquaintance with local officials was considered a prerequisite for gaining freedom in secondary activities. The cooperatives played a significant role in the development of these practices, since for non-members it was necessary to be on good terms with the chairman or other persons on the management board in order to get an allotment of land for private use. The villagers who were successful in farming small plots in the secondary economy were, therefore, those who had personal networks within the cooperatives. In this sense they were able to keep channels of private trust in the institution open, and these were opened wider towards the end of the socialist period.

Decollectivisation: The New Role of the Cooperative

Nigel Swain (2000: 6) distinguished four models of socialist collectivisation: the Polish and Yugoslavian cases, in which collectivisation was abandoned; the 'Stalinist model' of Albania and Romania; the 'neo-Stalinist model' in Czechoslovakia, the GDR, and Bulgaria, which entailed radical changes to the Stalinist conception of agriculture; and the 'Hungarian model', which combined features of the other forms with a 'symbiotic relationship' between the collective and the small-scale private sector. On the basis of this differentiation, Swain drew the main lines for postsocialist decollectivisation and its state and regional variations. In the case of the neo-Stalinist model, he identified some common trends of decollectivisation, such as the resil-

[11] The DUSLO, the largest industrial plant in the region, employed 3,300 workers in 1963; this number increased steadily to reach 5,669 in 1976. More than 1,000 workers were also employed in the Hydrostav complex in Šala, whereas the Galanta factories (machine assemblies, milk, confectionery, and furniture) absorbed several thousands of workers.

iency of collective farms, the slow development of the private sector, and the tendency towards a 'second transformation' of the postsocialist cooperatives into private cooperative successor companies, especially in the Czech and Slovak republics (Swain 2000: 9).

In Slovakia, decollectivisation was slowed by two factors: government policies that in the first half of the 1990s aimed at a gradual restitution of state assets—as compared, for instance, with the policies of the Czech Republic and Hungary—and the bureaucratic difficulties of rapidly implementing the restitution of private assets (Namerová and Swain 1998). Concerning the second point, because of the different histories of land tenure in the Slovak and Czech territories during the Austro-Hungarian monarchy (in Slovakia the multigeniture system was dominant, whereas in Bohemia, following Austria, land transmission was in the unigeniture line), it was far easier to re-establish viable private farms in the Czech Republic than in the Slovak Republic, where landholdings were more fragmented and dispersed (Wolz et al. 1998).[12] The result was that by the end of 1992 in Slovakia, 952 transformed cooperatives had been created out of the 630 units extant in 1989, along with 12 joint stock companies and 9 limited liability companies.

In 1992, the Šala cooperative underwent a complete reorganisation, becoming a cooperative based on voluntary membership. Restructuring of the cooperative followed a complicated process that can be mapped in four main steps: consolidation of property rights, restitution and/or compensation, issuance of bonds, and reorganisation of membership. The first step concerned the assertion of claims to land as proved by cadastral evidence. Owners were asked to provide valid documents of their properties owned in the 1950s or to produce two witnesses able to confirm their claim. This stage was characterised by confusion, owing to a lack of information about the claiming procedure and, more importantly, to the difficulty of providing proof of ownership.

The same year, a general assembly was called in the town stadium, where more than 1,100 claimants were instructed in the formalities of restitution. Restitution was immediately undertaken in the form of cash compensation to those who had suffered confiscation of animals and machinery. In the case of land, the situation was far more complicated. Because of the difficulty of physically restituting the same plots that owners claimed, the cooperative found itself having to mediate between the need to find realistic modes of compensation for original plots and the need not to fragment its farming area. The result was that plots which were not restituted because no

[12] Whereas in 1995 there were in Slovakia more than 2 million landowners with some 7 million plots, in 1996 in the Czech lands there were 3.8 million records of landownership with more than 3 million owners (Hudecková and Lošťák 1998: 1).

legal owners could be found and those which the owners returned (leased) to the cooperative are still in use by the cooperative and make up about 60% of the village's arable land (approximately 10% of this 60% has no legal owner). From this land, the cooperative rents out plots to private farmers. The position of these plots in the village changes every two years, according to the institution's needs.[13] The land which the cooperative restituted and which today is privately farmed is generally concentrated in one block, in order to form a compact whole and to avoid alternating private plots and cooperative land.

In the third step, shares were finally issued not only to cooperative members but to all owners of assets—land, animals, machines, and buildings—to which use rights had been transferred to the cooperative under socialism. These shares are tradable, and since 1993 their value has been in theory determined by the economic performance of the cooperative. Presently, some of the owners of these shares reside neither in the village nor in the town—for example, offspring of village families who left for Bratislava or other destinations abroad. Thus, they are not directly interested in the performance of the cooperative today. Others are more directly concerned about the future of the institution. One example of this concern is the refusal of some shareholders to respond to the chairman and accountants, who recently tried to acquire as many shares as possible by going door-to-door attempting to convince villagers to sell their shares. One informant, Péter (b. 1946), commented on this development, stressing that 'the cooperative is gradually improving its performance, and the value of its shares is rising. This is not unknown to many villagers. Obviously people want to wait for the most propitious moment to gain something from the sale'.

Concerning the restructuring of the cooperative, the general assembly held in 1992 decided to keep the cooperative's legal form. At the meeting, all members participated, and the system adopted was that of one member, one vote. The main change in the management board was the dismissal of the long-term socialist chairman in 1992. The newly appointed chairman, Vince, was supposedly proposed by Šala's rich peasant families, who did not view the former chairman favorably. Vince is the descendent of a Šala gazda family. During socialism, he was trained as an agronomist, but he never entered a cooperative. He worked in Bratislava and towards the second half of the 1980s returned to his hometown, where he was able to rent a few hectares of land and start farming. His candidacy was strongly supported by the town but was opposed by the villages, including Királyfa. One informant, Péter, stressed that the cooperative erred in choosing Vince because of

[13] This is also because interest from renters varies. In 1992 the share of land that the cooperative leased out to villagers was 178 hectares. This share dropped to 110 hectares in 1999.

his unconnectedness to the local political environment: 'I think they made a big mistake. Ján had all the connections of thirty years of office. Nobody was more qualified than he to keep things going smoothly with bureaucracy and politics. The new guy is OK, but he is too weak to manage his way in the political world. He lacks the networks, this is the problem'.

In December 2001 the cooperative had 492 members, 79 of them from Királyfa, and 163 workers, 23 of them from Királyfa. It cultivated 3,288 hectares of land divided in terms of ownership as follows: 1,193 hectares (36%) from the Land Fund,[14] 2,069 hectares (63%) from private owners, and only 26 hectares (1%) from cooperative property. Animal husbandry, dairy farming, and cultivation of cereals were the main areas of production. The cooperative was planning to expand its dairy sector (it already owned a milk-production plant situated in the town) and increase its number of cows by obtaining state and EU subsidies.

The cooperative today plays a new, important economic role in Királyfa, as practices of local interaction with the institution demonstrate. This is a function of several factors. On a structural level, the decollectivisation policies adopted by Slovakia after its peaceful divorce from the Czech Republic have strongly favoured the resiliency of cooperative forms of agriculture (Namerová 1997; Namerová and Swain 1998). One of the main reasons why the private agricultural sector was slow to take off in the first half of the 1990s was the different positions of private enterprises and the transformed cooperatives vis-à-vis political institutions. In most cases, the former cooperative chairmen (and managers) were in the best positions to gain access to state subsidies and credits, thanks to their extensive personal networks with local and national politicians, inherited from the previous regime (Namerová 1997). Private entrepreneurs, on the other hand, had to face an unfavourable economic environment—lack of capital, stagnation of prices, difficulty in obtaining subsidies, and weak ties to the retail sector—sometimes matched by envy and mistrust within the rural communities.

Iveta Namerová (1997) provides empirical evidence of this point, underlining that, especially in the regions of Slovakia where socialist cooperatives were successful, the 'envy' felt over the success of private farmers, along with distrust of extra-village private enterprises, favours the consolida-

[14] The Land Fund was set up in postsocialist Czechoslovakia in 1991 to incorporate all land that was on the 'waiting list' for restitution after legal claims were presented. It became a powerful instrument for the control of de-nationalised assets by political parties and local authorities, as practices widespread during the first half of the 1990s demonstrate. In the case of the Šala cooperative, in 1992 the great availability of land in the fund allowed for a certain relaxation in the rent system, but afterwards the cooperative was bound to pay annually 1% of the price of land it rented from the Land Fund, whereas the rent to private owners was 1.5%.

tion of the economic role of the new cooperatives. The situation in Királyfa is not very different. There, rather than envy towards the two 'successful' large-scale private farmers, who farm on average 20–26 hectares of land, it is the renewed economic importance of the cooperative that justifies people's resorting to it in case of need.

Another factor in the strengthened role of the cooperative is villagers' ideological attachment to 'their land', which becomes particularly strong when the ethnic issue is at stake. Villagers fear that land will be purchased by 'strangers' (*idegenek*). To cite an example, after 1990, all of the village forest land, about 35 hectares, was acquired by a Slovakian limited liability company based in Banská Bistrica, in northern Slovakia.[15] In 1997 the company started cutting almost indiscriminately some of the few trees that had survived collectivisation. Villagers judged this decision severely, and a few of them initiated a legal procedure, which, to my knowledge, has not yet been realised. It is of no surprise that, in light of the fate of some of the forest area, villagers do not feel ready to lease or sell their land to non-locals. This tendency found proof in 1999 and 2000 when one neighbouring village's private enterprise, a limited company transformed out of the socialist cooperative, proposed to buy some portions of village land, but most of those to whom an offer was made refused.[16]

The last factor to be considered in understanding the strengthened role of the cooperative as a public institution concerns the rent relationship between the cooperative and the owners of the land it farms. The cooperative today pays an annual rent that is negotiable with each individual but is roughly 1,300–1,500 SK (about 32–38 Euros) per hectare. Even though the rent is not extremely high, the agreement is made on the basis of a five-year contract, and when the cooperative is unable to pay in cash, it pays in kind (staples, fodder). This option is often preferred by villagers who raise animals but do not grow fodder. Private companies are sometimes able to offer more, but in many cases their offers prove too good to be true.

In 2000, a local limited company offered a ten-year rental contract for 2,000 SK (about 50 Euros) per hectare. As one informant said, this price could not have been real, and those who accepted discovered this soon afterwards. The contract had two main conditions: it lasted ten years, and owners could break it only if the company had not paid them rent for two

[15] In Slovakia, forest land has not been an object of restitution.

[16] Gábor commented: 'Why should I sell them my land? I don't know who they are and I'm not happy that some Slovaks will get hold of the land of my ancestors'.

consecutive years. The company used the land free of rent for two years and then waited for the owners to break their contracts.[17]

These and similar experiences during the chaotic post-1989 transformation have taught villagers to be cautious when dealing with external, private institutions. The outcome has been twofold. First, the cooperative has gained a solid position in the economic system of its rural communities by managing the land that decollectivisation brought back to the villagers, many of whom were unready or unwilling to farm, and by providing services to local farmers. Second, villagers express caution in dealing with 'unfamiliar' private institutions. They attempt to control the instability of the times by relying on 'safer' and spatially closer institutions with which personal networks and relations of trust can be established.

Trust in the Postsocialist Cooperative

The cooperative today is a consolidated economic institution in Királyfa and its neighbouring town. The institution's renewed public role is a product of the changed relations of property that the post-1992 decollectivisation brought about. What remains to be addressed is the question of how people see the institution today in light of its transformation.

In spite of the cooperative's strong presence in village life, people in Királyfa were, upon initial enquiry, outspoken about their mistrust of it and its performance. This was mainly an expression of the institution's past developments. One villager, Gábor, commented: 'It is the cooperative that destroyed our economy. First they took away our land and animals, then they built this mammoth farming style that could do nothing else than spoil the soil and contaminate the water. Once they were proud of reaching 70 to 80 quintals per hectare; now they are lucky to reach 40!' Antal added: 'At least last year they gave me something for the land, I mean some grain, not money. We are not used to seeing money in these times, even if they, at the cooperative, may say that they pay on time and exactly'.

Moreover, the mistrust implicit in villagers' words eventually found confirmation in one of the present cooperative manager's ideas about trust. Lőrinc (b. 1947), said, 'I see that a lack of trust in society was a characteristic of before [the socialist period]. However, now it is more important for us to be trusted by people, even though it is indeed more difficult than before'.

These words suggest that villagers today feel significant concern about the role of the cooperative in their community. On one hand, some people seem ready to run the institution down, complaining about the lack of

[17] It is unclear to me whether the company has ever paid compensation for its fraud, but I am aware of cases of villagers bringing legal actions against it.

punctuality in rent payments and emphasising the violence of the historical process of collectivisation. On the other hand, trust becomes an important issue because, as Lőrinc's comment suggests, the position of the cooperative in the village has profoundly changed. The cooperative is no longer a 'propagation of the socialist state', as András described it, and therefore it must work hard to achieve trustworthiness among the villagers. The interplay of external conditions (the unreliability of the private sector) and some internal conditions (the cooperative's provision of limited services) has helped the institution overcome some of the obstacles to its acceptance in the community.

Despite the mistrust they harbor towards the cooperative, villagers have not abandoned their relations with it or denied the importance of its services. A large proportion of the village's families, including those who do not own agricultural land apart from their garden plots, purchase pigs from the cooperative. This choice is not forced by circumstances, because at least three private pig breeders also operate in the village.

Gábor, the informant who expressed his strong mistrust of the cooperative, also noted that he had resorted to its services more than once: "I used to buy pigs from a small company operating in the village. Last year two animals out of three became sick and died. I gave up and now I buy only from the cooperative. They have better controls, and they can follow your animals' health if you know someone to ask'. Antal commented similarly: 'It was cheaper for me to go to the cooperative. I have some relatives there and they can tell me when prices are going down, so that I can buy there more conveniently than in other places'.

Other cases of relations between farmers and the cooperative involved the need to hire tractors, combines, and other heavy agricultural machinery, the purchase of fodder, and the rent of fodder plots. In the case of machinery, although the two large-size farmers had their own machines, they were unable, because of time constrictions and volume of work, to lend or rent their services to other farmers, except for close relatives. The strategy that some villagers pursue is to resort to personal acquaintances or relatives who work in the cooperative and are able to provide the rental of such machinery when the cooperative is working on the village land. In this sense, the role of those who work for the cooperative or who, being members, have personal connections to the institution becomes crucial, because they are repeatedly asked for help in mediating with the cooperative. In this way, channels of private trust are left open as strategic avenues for managing the instability and hardships of the present time.

Conclusion

The restitution of property rights in Királyfa illustrates both change and continuity in the relationship between villagers and their cooperative. It may be inappropriate to draw pessimistic conclusions about the organisation's future, because the configuration of practices and ideas that characterised the former regime is still part of the villagers' everyday life. One paradoxical result of restitution has been that villagers today are readier to hold onto the cooperative, the transformed heir to the socialist institution, than to support private farming. This can be explained as the outcome of a number of factors. First, since 1992 people have had to deal with their restituted land. The weakness of the land market and the high fragmentation of plots make the sale of land a less than desirable option. At the same time, because many villagers are not interested in farming or cannot farm their plots, the cooperative remains the best solution for the management of these assets. Second, the low degree of trust in non-village private enterprises contributes to strengthening the cooperative as the preferred option, to which villagers resort in their economic choices. Third, personal networks and trust link villagers to the cooperative through the mediation of individuals who work for or are members of the institution. Villagers feel the need to keep these networks active because they perceive the importance of dealing with the cooperative in daily practices such as farming, gardening, and raising animals.

Historical analysis of collectivisation and decollectivisation in Királyfa helps to reveal the inadequacy of Banfield's (1958) model for understanding postsocialism. The main failure of the 'amoral familist' approach is that it overlooks the intermingling of different levels of trust in society. As long as the diffusion of private trust (personal ties and networks) is seen as hampering the consolidation of public (or institutional) trust, there is no room to challenge this model. History, however, teaches that people shape their relationships with institutions in changing and often contradictory manners, according to the necessities dictated by changing external conditions. Public and private trust may at times intermingle and at times be dichotomously constructed by actors as they make strategic decisions to cope with the uncertainty of the times.

After decollectivisation, the Királyfa cooperative regained momentum in the economic and social life of the village. This was not a result of the prevalence of clientelistic types of networks, which foster personal trust only between villagers and the institution. It was, rather, the major institutional transformation, the restitution of property rights, that called forth a renewed public role for the cooperative.

Nonetheless, the mistrust some villagers express for the institution today is, in light of the painful collectivisation of socialist times, the uttered demonstration that they have not forgotten their history. This contradiction between spoken and practised reality suggests that in order to understand the complexity of the transformation, words must be interpreted through careful observation of villagers' everyday strategies and choices and their change over time. In this way, the idea of the 'backwardness' of societies dominated by low levels of public trust can be exposed in its full superficiality and perhaps lose some of its appeal to scholars of rapidly changing societies.

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Chapter 4

The Great Transformation in Rural Hungary Property, Life Strategies, and Living Standards

Chris Hann and Mihály Sárkány

The periodizations imposed by scholars on the continuous flux of historical events do not always resonate with social actors, and transformations affecting all social groups can be experienced by them in different ways. For example, Ferenc Erdei (1942) showed that Hungary's protracted transition from feudalism to capitalism had quite different consequences for specific groups and regions. The transition to socialism took place more rapidly, in a process that was carefully planned at the political centre. Yet even socialist institutions left individuals space to pursue their own life strategies, which resulted, as before, in systematic socio-economic and regional differences. In this chapter we focus on the most recent changes in Hungary, after central powerholders had once again attempted to implement comprehensive changes, but now in the opposite direction.[1]

We use Karl Polanyi's (1944) term 'great transformation', with some irony, to characterise not just the transition to capitalism but the aggregate of all three historical transitions. Each one introduced a new property regime into the Hungarian village. In orthodox Marxist theory, property relations are determined by relations of production and play a central role in the reproduction of the social formation. In orthodox liberal theory, property relations emerge as a natural consequence of social evolution and the pursuit of economic efficiency. Both orthodoxies, in their different ways, give priority to the domain of economy. They do not theorise the role of the state and of competing interest groups in shaping the property regime by, for example, strengthening or weakening its 'public' aspects through the specification of citizens' entitlements (Dahrendorf 1988).

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[1] The standard Hungarian terms for these latest changes are *rendszerváltás* and *rendszerváltoztatás*. Both mean 'system change'. Despite differences of nuance and style within the political elite, the dominant parties aspired to transform virtually all aspects of politics, economy, and society in accordance with the norms of parliamentary democracy and market economy, an aspiration only partly realised in practice.

We wish, particularly, to explore the possibility that, under postsocialist conditions, the ownership of productive property has ceased to be as central to life strategies or living standards as it was in the past and as it remains in much theorising about property. In the case of Hungary, the 'third transition' may be less significant than is often supposed. The reason is simple. Everywhere in the former socialist countries, the new property regime is intimately linked to the shift to a market economy. But Hungary had been pursuing market-oriented reforms since at least 1968, and these led to far-reaching changes in living conditions for the great mass of the population. A general model of socialism that overlooks this fact (e.g., Verdery 1996) is necessarily inadequate.

General models of the rural sector are similarly suspect. The socialists envisaged a countryside dominated by collective and state farms, with workers whom they expected to behave and think like factory workers. This image or ideology was increasingly abandoned with the expansion of the market economy and the private sector. Influenced by a strong tradition in Hungarian sociology, dating back to Erdei, many social scientists detected signs of *polgárosodás,* 'embourgeoisement', in the rural society of the 1980s (Kovách 1988; Szelenyi 1988). However, we may doubt whether the urban category 'bourgeois' is appropriate to the distinctive 'symbiosis' (Swain 1985) of large and small that characterised the Hungarian countryside. It is possible that better models are available in the studies by rural sociologists of western European societies—studies of the demise of the traditional 'peasantry', of the rise of *pluriactivité,* but also of increasing polarisation in the social structure (Franklin 1969; Mendras 1984).

We shall return to general models in the concluding section of the chapter, but we set out sceptical of them all and proceed inductively. The next sections introduce the two communities we have studied and sketch their development up until the end of the socialist period. There follows for each village a more detailed discussion of salient changes in the last decade, in which both commonalities and contrasts are traced.

The Villages Introduced

We have known these communities for a long time, though in different ways. Mihály Sárkány, a native of Budapest, first worked in Varsány between 1971 and 1975, as a member of a research team of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences led by Tibor Bodrogi. His study of changing economic relations was the basis for his Ph.D. dissertation and numerous later publications (Sárkány 1978, 1983). He began a restudy of the village in 2001, this time as leader himself of a group consisting of two other members of the

former research team (Kata Jávor and Piroska Szabó) and of his Budapest university students.[2]

In contrast, Chris Hann had almost no knowledge of rural Hungary and the Hungarian language when he arrived in Budapest on a British Council exchange scholarship in 1975. With help from Sárkány and Bodrogi, he was later able to spend almost a year in the village of Tázlár. This fieldwork formed the basis for his Ph.D. dissertation and later publications (Hann 1980, 1983). He revisited the village regularly, but a stay of two months in the summer of 2001 was his first attempt to gather data systematically since the original research. In contrast to Sárkány, who has always worked with a research team, Hann has always been a 'lone ranger' in Tázlár. These differences reflect differences both in intellectual traditions and in the practical constraints on the two researchers. This chapter is our first attempt to bridge the obvious differences.

The location of the two villages is shown in the map. Tázlár lies approximately 140 kilometres south-east of the capital, exactly midway between the rivers Danube and Tisza. In 2001 it had 2,017 inhabitants, approximately 25 persons per hectare of territory.[3] The landscape is flat, the climate dry, and soils sandy and less fertile than most other zones of the Great Plain. The medieval village was abandoned following Ottoman occupation. Tázlár's pu*szta* (uninhabited land) was later used as pasture by the inhabitants of the market town of Kiskőrös. In the course of the nineteenth century it was gradually broken up, and a new settlement was formally established in 1872. Over the decades that followed, land was sold in increasingly smaller parcels, mostly to migrants from adjacent land-hungry regions. This migratory process, which involved the acquisition of land as exclusive private property, was a part of Hungary's long transition from feudalism to capitalism. This did not mean that farming in Tázlár was organised according to the principles of modern capitalism. There were great differences in acreage and economic potential, and wealthy families met their labour needs primarily by taking in farm servants (*cselédek*) from poorer families. Economic exploitation was disguised through a language of mutual support and gift giving, adaptations of a much older moral economy (Thompson 1971). Apart from two small clusters, the great majority of the

[2] The field research was sponsored by the OTKA Program T 34799 in Hungary. While working on this chapter, Sárkány enjoyed the hospitality of the Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology for two months in 2002. He also visited Hann's village on several occasions, and Hann reciprocated by paying a short visit to Varsány in 2001.

[3] All statistics given in this chapter are taken from official sources, national and local.

new settlers lived on their plots, in scattered farms known as *tanyák*. The population rose to more than 3,000, and the experience of poverty and social exclusion was perhaps as great here as anywhere else in the country (Erdei 1937).

Varsány, with 1,778 inhabitants in 2001, or approximately 65 persons per hectare, is located about 110 kilometres north of Budapest, in a hilly region of relatively poor soils close to the border with Slovakia. The village dates from the thirteenth century. It was part of the estates of various feudal lords, whose territory became a buffer zone between the Ottoman state and Habsburg Hungary. The village was taxed from both sides, and its population changed many times. After Ottoman withdrawal, it was resettled in the eighteenth century, but still within the legal and institutional framework of feudalism, from which it was slow to emerge. The liberation of serfs in 1848 (implemented in the 1860s) did little to eradicate status differences. A feudal structure of landholdings persisted, even though aristocrats were partially

replaced by landowners belonging to the new urban middle class. One of these estates became a model for modernising agricultural production. The number of entrepreneurial smallholders remained limited, and subsistence-oriented farming with strong moral commitments continued to characterise social norms. The ideal of self-sufficiency was unattainable for the majority, who had insufficient land. Members of these families were forced to work as day labourers (*napszámosok*) or, as in Tázlár, to work on nearby estates as farm servants. Some went to work on remote estates as contracted labourers for the May–October agricultural season, receiving the money part of their payment in one sum (*summások*). The few craftsmen and industrial labourers living in the village also carried out small-scale agricultural production.

Table 4.1 shows the structure of landholding in the two communities in 1935. The potential for independent farming appears to have been greater in Tázlár, with a much higher representation of farms in the 5–50 and 50–100 *hold* categories, though we need to remember that soil quality was generally lower in Tázlár. Otherwise, the two communities show similarities. Holdings of over 100 *hold* occupied 40% of the territory of Tázlár and 65% of the territory of Varsány, and these created the biggest local labour market. Tázlár had a higher proportion of labour-intensive production of vegetables and fruits—4% of its total agricultural area, in comparison with only 1% in Varsány. In 1935, 21% of Varsány's territory was covered by forest; the figure for Tázlár was 10%.

Table 4.1: Agricultural Landholdings in Tázlár and Varsány, 1935

	Number of Holdings by Size in Cadastral *Holds*							
Village	0–1	1–5	5–50	50–100	100–500	500–1,000	1,000–3,000	Total
Tázlár	88	279	507	55	26	3	1	959
Varsány	76	159	69	7	5		1	317

Note: 1 *hold* = approximately 0.6 hectares.

The Socialist Period

Both villages experienced land reform in 1945. This eliminated the remaining large (manorial) estates, but it did not lead to a substantial increase in viable, self-sufficient holdings and did not fundamentally alter the intricate hierarchical dependencies of the traditional moral economy. These came under more sustained pressure after 1949, with repeated campaigns to promote cooperative forms of farming. Early cooperatives were viewed with suspicion by the great mass of villagers, and their economic results were poor (Hann 1983; cf. Torsello, this volume). Wealthier families experienced severe discrimination in the early 1950s. Acreage and the hiring of a non-familial labour force were the decisive criteria for placement on the kulak list, though due to the inferior soils of their land, some of the villagers of Tázlár and Varsány who ended up on this list were not really so wealthy at all. In addition to heavy taxes and prescribed deliveries of produce, numerous kulaks were subjected to the arbitrary appropriation of items of property, including their houses. Some were imprisoned.

Collectivisation was completed in Varsány in 1960 when all except four farming households, who members were allowed to continue as independent farmers, joined a cooperative founded by former agrarian proletarians in 1948. This institution was known as the *termelőszövetkezet,* or simply TSz. It was modelled distantly on the Soviet *kolkhoz,* but we shall call it the producers' cooperative, a literal translation of the Hungarian term. Members of this cooperative retained legal title to their own land, but the socialists aimed to 'wash out' the private nature of the ownership (Nagy 1979: 10–14). The land was used *as if* it were collectively owned, just like the animals, implements, buildings, machinery, and other assets of the organisation. Cultivation was carried out according to plans drawn up by management. The chairman was nominally elected but in reality was 'recommended' for the position by the district representative of the ruling Socialist Workers' Party. State and party control were ubiquitous, but the cooperative was an independent economic unit.

From the middle of the 1960s, leadership positions in the cooperative were increasingly taken over by persons with higher education in agriculture or economics. Mainly it was children of former kulaks who reached this rank, but in Varsány, so too did the son of a former agrarian proletarian (he was also president of the village council in the 1950s). Members of the Varsány cooperative were paid according to the type and kind of work they carried out. After the first years, this payment took the form of a monthly salary. They also received a small 'share' at the end of the agricultural year, corresponding to their work and to the land they had brought into the collective. Before 1967, even those who did not work for the cooperative received

a small sum.[4] More significant economically was the household plot, which was approximately 0.6 hectare for active members and 0.3 hectare for retired members. Even this plot was usually cultivated by the cooperative, and payment was made to members either in kind or in cash. Members had the right to cultivate these plots individually if they wanted to, and the locations of the household plots changed from year to year.

Agricultural production was modernised rapidly in Varsány, and the flow of men out of agriculture, which started in the 1950s, accelerated in the 1960s and continued even later. Whereas in the 1950s it was the descendants of the kulaks and people with very small farms who sought jobs outside of agriculture, from the 1960s every stratum of the village participated. As unskilled labourers, many found work in the construction industry and became long-distance commuters (industrial development in the vicinity was very limited). Women came to dominate in the cooperative, and fruit plantations were created to give them work. Otherwise, the established agricultural branches showed little change. A small galvanising workshop was set up, also to create jobs for women, but it was abandoned because of its side effects on the workers' health. State health and social services were extended to inhabitants of the village, including the right of cooperative members to a pension. Excursions and holidays organised by the organisation were appreciated by the beneficiaries.

Tázlár, like many other villages in this region of the Great Plain, was allowed to follow a different course, a course which shows that the implementation of collectivisation was not always as rigid as is usually supposed in the West. Given the ecology of the region, it was evident that a rapid shift to large-scale farming methods would have jeopardised the production of the small-scale orchards and vineyards that had grown up over generations on the holdings around the scattered tanyák. The concession was theoretically temporary. It allowed the members of Tázlár's three newly formed cooperatives to continue farming their plots in the old way, as family units. The old social hierarchies of the village had been eroded in the 1950s. Under this compromise, it was possible to stave off the new hierarchies of the cooperative farms. Following economic liberalisation after 1968, this pragmatic

[4] After a new land law was passed in 1967, the land of these persons was acquired (*megváltott*) by the cooperative, which then became the owner of the land in its own right. When members of the cooperative died, their land was inherited by their children. If the latter were not cooperative members, the 1967 law provided for the acquisition of the land by the cooperative. The 'price' was dictated by the state and was considered to be below the 'market' price. Those affected were therefore entitled to compensation vouchers after 1992, like the former kulaks, but at a reduced rate in comparison with those members who retained their formal title to land until the end of the socialist period.

arrangement was given formal recognition, and this form of cooperative was henceforth called the *szakszövetkezet* (specialist cooperative).

The ideological commitment to eventual collectivisation along the lines of the *termelőszövetkezet* was never abandoned. The three cooperatives were brought together to form a single *szakszövetkezet* in 1974. Shortly afterwards, the local leaders, who had managed to secure a degree of acceptance for the institution, were replaced by a group of younger men, strangers to the village with the appropriate agricultural qualifications and political credentials. They in turn came under political pressure from outside the village to create large fields in the most fertile areas adjacent to the modern village centre. This was resented by the villagers still farming those plots, who objected as strongly as they had objected to the campaigns of the Stalinist period. The conflict highlighted the sentimental strength of the old ties of property, still an important base of community norms and values at the time of Hann's fieldwork. The large fields became a reality and a success for the cooperative in production terms, but given the relative abundance of land, it was still possible to meet the wishes of all those who requested alternative plots to enable them to continue farming on a household basis. Some villagers found jobs in the collective sector of the cooperative, but for most, agricultural work remained primarily a household affair. Many men became commuters, some of them perhaps working alongside commuters from Varsány in the factories and building sites of the Budapest agglomeration.

Despite the weakening of their property rights over land, by the mid-1970s the villagers of Tázlár were rapidly accumulating other types of goods. Many new houses were being constructed in the village centre, and older ones, including many tanyák, were being upgraded to modern standards. The state played its part with investments in road improvements, electrification, and piped water. New cars became conspicuous, mostly the Soviet Moskvitch and Zhiguli but also the East German Trabant and Wartburg and the Czechoslovak Skoda. One Skoda was purchased in 1975 by a skilled worker with the proceeds of his three years as a guestworker in East Germany. Most of the new motor vehicles were acquired with revenues derived primarily from small-scale farming, though by the 1970s most households had at least one source of regular wage income. The cooperative assisted its members with various inputs, including cheap fodder and machine services, and also in marketing. Many grumbled at the 10% deduction retained by the institution to support 'unproductive' staff in the central offices, who were continuously accused of petty embezzlement. At the same time, all villagers knew that, in comparison with most other rural dwellers, they were fortunate. It was possible to operate private shops and businesses (known as *maszek,* formed from *magán szektor,* literally, private sector), and

builders were especially in demand in the boom years of the 1970s. But only a few individuals invested in tractors and combine harvesters in order to compete with the cooperative in supplying services to the majority who did not own these means of production.

In Varsány the bond between the family and its patrimony was permanently severed in 1960, and only the household plot allotted by the cooperative remained. Although the local TSz was repeatedly bankrupt before 1979, this did not hinder a rapid improvement in living conditions, comparable to that experienced in Tázlár. Varsány had fewer households engaged in full-time family farming, but many women worked for the TSz and, as in Tázlár, the men who commuted became small-scale farmers at the weekend. Like the *szakszövetkezet,* the TSz provided many services to its members, including cheap transportation, provision of fodder and machinery, and the marketing of bulls and pigs.

This prosperity did not transform the moral economy, at least not in the short term. In both villages, wealth and moral obligations alike were demonstrated on the occasion of weddings, which became increasingly lavish, and also in house building, which depended to a high degree on mutual aid among kin. In Varsány, new forms of status competition emerged—for example, in dressing children 'nicely'—but elements of the ancient folk dress and other local traditions were actively cultivated in singing and dancing groups. The number of cars grew from 3 in 1971 to 110 in 1980 (Hausel 2000: 163), but in Varsány no one invested in agricultural machinery. More and more children proceeded to secondary education, and the number of 'intellectuals' (teachers, doctors, collective farm leaders, council officials, postal employees, etc.) increased from 40 in 1970 to 87 in 1980. The figures for Tázlár were similar: 47 and 87, respectively. As Table 4.2 shows, in neither village did this trend continue in the 1980s.

Table 4.2: Occupational Structure of the Active Population in the Two Villages, 1990

Village	Total	Industry	Constr-uction	Agricul-ture	Services	Other Manual	Intell-ectuals
Tázlár	806	205	33	342	75	70	81
Varsány	820	208	153	108	100	145	86

In the 1980s the cooperative farm in Varsány became a well-managed agricultural enterprise that invested in major soil improvement schemes as well as in a blackcurrant plantation. It also supported the education of villagers wishing to make a career in agriculture by providing special scholarships. There was an important change in the administration of the village as well. Between 1949 and 1980, all presidents of the village council came from the stratum of agrarian proletarians. After 1980, the presidents had a more sophisticated knowledge of administration and weaker bonds in the locality. The most important achievement of this decade was the introduction of running water into all houses.

Modernisation is also a question of generational change. People continued to have different work ethics and value orientations, depending on whether they had been socialised as private farmers or as agrarian labourers (Gyenes 1968; Jávor 1978). Of course this difference decreased with time. Irrespective of their family backgrounds, from the early 1970s no younger women wanted anything more to do with milking cows, and so the number of cows in the household sector fell rapidly. Many of the new two-storey houses had no outbuildings for pigs and no gardens. Younger people preferred to live in a 'clean' environment, with a lawn in front of their house, but they still kept pigs in the sties belonging to their parents, who continued to live in traditional housing but contributed to the construction of the new houses with both money and labour.

The Budapest research team had the impression in the first half of the 1970s that the old social stratification, based on the ownership of land, was gone but not forgotten. It had been replaced by a new and more open system in which one's job and educational qualifications were the determining factors. Since the children of former kulaks tended to be better educated, they stood a good chance of regaining their family's status, but there were exceptions and numerous personal tragedies in the process of social change. Those occupying the same position in the hierarchy of work, such as manual workers in agriculture or industry, were interested only in the amount of money they could earn. The community was held together by strong familial and kinship bonds, with a clear cleavage between Hungarians and Gypsies. The latter lived in a separate quarter of the village and worked in separate construction brigades. They had never owned land, though some of them did seasonal agricultural work, and one drove a tractor for the collective farm in the 1980s.

In Tázlár, the last decade of socialism brought further changes. The political hiccough of the mid-1970s was quickly reversed. Another cohort of leaders, again brought in from outside, adopted a different style and reaffirmed the flexible treatment of household farming initiated in 1961. The

moral divide could not be bridged, but it was at least better disguised through the paternalistic bonhomie of the new chairman; the communal meals that followed the members' assemblies in these years became genuinely popular events. Pension entitlements were significantly extended, to include even most of those who had never worked outside the household, provided they had sold produce through cooperative channels.

Of particular importance for the long-term economic prospects of the village was the cooperative's initiative in planting vineyards on a large scale, using modern technology, as a 'joint venture' with households. The latter signed long-term leases committing them to carrying out labour-intensive tasks, while the institution provided the necessary supporting services, for payment. These initiatives transformed the vineyard branch and gave many families a greatly enhanced stake in productive property. The need for additional labour was met through mutual aid and an expansion of the market for day labourers. In comparison with neighbouring villages with similarly flexible institutions, however, few Tázlár villagers invested in the cellars and processing equipment that would have enabled them to produce and store their own wine and thereby raise their profit margins.

Milk and pork production remained important sources of income for many farming households, but neither they nor the *szakszövetkezet* collectively made significant investments in these branches. The cooperative invested instead in two small factories, one for manufacturing plastic bags, and the other, shoe uppers, which provided popular job opportunities, especially for women. The consumerist trends of the 1970s did not abate: the number of horses continued to fall while cars multiplied, including the first foreign imports from the West. Villagers now identified themselves through what they consumed rather than through what they owned, but the principal basis for this new self-definition was the wealth they generated through small-scale commodity production.

Generalisations about social structure in Tázlár in this era of late socialist prosperity are difficult. Political credentials and specialist qualifications were important in the formal institutions of the council, the cooperative, and the combined school and Culture House. But the 'intelligentsia' remained small, and by no means everyone who worked in these institutions was sympathetic to communism. The village doctor and one teacher, who lived in the house next door, were the only inhabitants to maintain lawns in this period, but the latter also bought into one of the new joint-venture vineyards as a source of additional household income. The old social hierarchy, based on landownership, did not fade quickly. Marriages between young people of different 'class' origins became more common, but they still attracted comment. Children of former kulaks were more likely to proceed to

higher education. They were also prominent among the new entrepreneurs, but the most successful of all was the scion of a family that had never owned much land but specialised instead in petty trading in the markets of Budapest and Szeged. This man's rapid rise to riches began in the 1980s and continued smoothly thereafter, despite rumours of corruption and 'mafia' dealings. His career was frequently criticised in terms of the dominant standards of the old peasant moral economy, because it was taken to exemplify the dangers of allowing so much scope to the market principle.

Postsocialist Tázlár

The loose structure of the specialist cooperative ensured that postsocialism in Tázlár was experienced less dramatically than in Varsány and most of rural Hungary. In spite of changes in property relations and deteriorating socio-economic conditions, for many inhabitants of Tázlár it is more appropriate to emphasise continuity. This was expressed in the outcome of the first free local elections of 1990 (Hann 1992). The contest for the new post of mayor was won by an elderly woman who had served for decades as executive secretary of the outgoing socialist council. She triumphed against energetic competition from the young entrepreneur just mentioned, whose radicalism seemed somehow threatening to the majority. The chairman of the cooperative and his deputy retained their positions. The organisation, which had privatised much of its machine park in the mid-1980s, quickly auctioned the rest and, under pressure from a small activist group, withdrew from all agricultural production. It modified its name from Peace Agricultural Specialist Cooperative to simply Peace Cooperative and distributed shares to its members according to a formula that took into account three factors: assets originally taken into the organization, produce sold through the cooperative, and wages or salary earned from it (see Hann 2001).

There was an apparent consensus among villagers in 1990 that land should be returned to its original owners, whenever they claimed it. The activist group organised a branch of the Independent Smallholder's Party, which replaced the socialists as the principal political grouping in the village. Land distribution was, however, complicated by national legislation that provided for a system of compensation that did not guarantee restitution of family plots, the moral aspiration of the Smallholder's Party. It took approximately five years for the various committees to do their work, and even then a few cases had to be settled in court. Most villagers obtained more or less the land they wanted, but the process was fraught with tension. When the state's surveyors did not measure plots to the satisfaction of the former owners, the latter were quick to allege manipulation and to recall differences in social status originating in the presocialist era. When it was all

over, many felt that 'those close to the fire', that is, cooperative officeholders and members of the various committees, had looked after their own interests. Even if one's own claims had been met in full, it rankled when valuable resources such as forest and lakes became the private property of persons who were not natives of the community.

Popular disgruntlement was undoubtedly affected by the general decline in agricultural markets in the 1990s. In contrast to the security of the socialist years, people now regularly had difficulty selling the products of their vineyards or the pigs they had raised. All sectors saw a substantial decline and little or no investment. Those who owned machines preferred to perform services for households, as the cooperative had done in the socialist period, rather than expand their own farms. Large areas of the hinterland previously under cultivation were left for sheep to graze (the animals were still owned by the cooperative but were contracted out to individuals) or abandoned entirely. Many outlying zones were taken over by common milkweed (*vaddohány*), which is considered harmful to other plants and to humans, as a source of allergies. Official publicity campaigns to eradicate it are supported by all except a few hobby beekeepers.

A few villagers have made new investments in vines, including one entrepreneur who aims to replicate the large-scale vineyards that have proved to be the most enduring productive legacy of the socialist period. The ownership of the soil on which the socialist vineyards were established has been a bone of contention (Hann 2001). For many households, recruiting the labour to tend these vines, and above all for the harvest, is the major economic challenge of the year. Some continue to rely primarily on bonds of reciprocity with family and friends, but many have come to depend on seasonal migrants from Romania. Some poorer Tázlár villagers themselves work for most of the summer for the daily rate (*napszám*) in the larger vineyards of the neighbouring town, Soltvadkert.

The village has been seriously affected by the collapse of socialist institutions, not only in the agricultural sector but also in the industrial sector of the towns, to which many villagers had commuted in the later socialist years. The official number of unemployed in 2001 was 80 persons, but this figure is doubly suspect. On the one hand, many small-scale farmers (*őstermelők*) would certainly take up wage labour jobs if opportunities were available. On the other, some of those officially registered as unemployed in fact work intensively as agricultural labourers or in the 'black' or 'grey' sectors of small-scale industry and commerce, both inside and outside the village. The cooperative's small factories have fallen on increasingly hard times, due not only to competition in the region but also to the tendency of foreign partners to transfer contracts to cheaper countries. In 2002, work at the shoe

factory was suspended, apparently because the outsourcing German partner had found a new partner in Romania. The plastics workshop was also working well below capacity, unable to pay all of its workers the official minimal wage or to invest in new equipment.

The cooperative has continued to provide some basic services to farmers, especially in marketing, but most villagers are dismissive of its contribution in the postsocialist years. Its leaders are known to have bought out many smaller shareholders. The number of members fell from 716 to 297 in the course of a decade, and this trend accelerated in 2002 thanks to a government scheme to support the acquisition of shares from pensioners and non-resident members. It has long been expected that the leaders would at some point initiate the cooperative's transformation into a private company, but the return to power of a socialist-led government in 2002 may at least temporarily remove their incentive to make this change. The cooperative still organises one or two social events annually for the community, but in no sense can it claim to represent the moral base.

That role has been successfully embraced in recent years by an energetic young mayor. First elected in 1994 and re-elected for the second time in 2002, this former cooperative employee worked briefly as a policeman after the 'system change'. He has never joined a political party, but as the only son of a well-respected family of the former middle peasantry, he was able to mobilise the support of the Smallholder's Party and to stay in touch with that constituency when the party eventually disintegrated in turmoil. But neither he nor the occupant of a new position introduced in 1998, that of 'village master' (*falugazdász*), who has his office in the same central building, is able to coordinate the activities and interests of the small-scale farmers.

The families that were able to continue the upwards trend of the 1970s and 1980s, or at least to maintain the living standards of the late socialist period, generally had nothing to do with the cooperative and little to do with any form of agriculture. Very few farming households have opted for the category 'entrepreneur', whereas 578 have the status of small-scale farmer (*őstermelő*). The flamboyant entrepreneur of the late socialist period quit the village and disposed of his assets there after his defeat in the mayoral election of 1990. When last heard of, he was running a successful restaurant in downtown Budapest. At least one young man, from a poor *tanya* background, made a fortune in the lucrative (later exposed as corrupt) petroleum sector in the early 1990s. On this basis, he was able to establish a wide range of successful businesses outside the village in succeeding years. Several newcomers to the village have made large investments in modern agricultural technology for the production of vegetables and flowers, but their

performance has been patchy. Others prospered on the basis of foundations securely laid in the socialist period: the first entrepreneur to own tractors and a combine harvester in the 1970s became, in the 1990s, the proprietor of a gas station and an international road haulage business. He is not the only one to favour a strategy of diversification. The most successful local builder also owns a successful restaurant in a neighbouring town, while his wife earns a good salary in the local administration. Another haulier has invested in forests, and several teachers and officials have extensive interests in agriculture, including vineyards.

Not everyone who seemed set for an upwards trajectory in the 1970s has gone on to prosper. The other *maszek* builders of that era have been unable to emulate the builder cum restaurateur just mentioned. The only car mechanic of that period, the first villager to build a two-storey house, still repairs old Trabants in his workshop 30 years later, but he has failed to keep up with new car types and technologies. His recent entrepreneurial experiments in raising rabbits and mushrooms have proved unsuccessful. The absence of a son to maintain the business is probably a factor, in his case and several others, in explaining stagnation and decline. As under socialism, education and a consequent shift of residence and career to the urban sector help to explain why so few descendants of the former kulaks are active in farming today. The number of children who proceed to higher education does not seem to have risen, however, since the 1970s.

Long-distance commuting to the factories of Budapest seems less significant in the postsocialist period than in the 1970s. New opportunities have emerged for people to work outside Hungary, such as seasonal agricultural work in Germany or nannying in the United States. The wife of the former *Gastarbeiter* in East Germany mentioned earlier explored both of these possibilities, but her extended absences led to the break-up of her marriage. Another villager has for several years worked for some two months per year as a blacksmith in western Germany, earning enough to upgrade his village house lavishly and to finance his son through higher education. Others have worked illegally in western European countries, taking risks in order to earn at a far higher rate than they could in anything open to them in Hungary. Long-term insurance and pension considerations lead almost everyone to prefer regular employment at home, if only they can find it.

Postsocialist Varsány

Social and political changes were sharper in Varsány. The monopoly of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party over the position of council chairman came to an end in 1990 with the election of a relatively young mayor (38 years old) with no party affiliation. He had previously worked as a driver but

had gone on to acquire additional qualifications and to hold white-collar positions in a transportation firm. His father had been a smallholder before 1960, and so the new mayor was seen by many as a representative of smallholder interests. The Smallholder's Party had no local organisation. The socialists, the main successor party to the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party, were the best organised, with 23 members. (The other heir, the communist-oriented Workers' Party, also had a few adherents.) The Christian Democrats had no formal organisation in the village but profited from the strong attachment of many villagers to Roman Catholicism (Manga 1978). The influence of the church grew and was reflected in national parliamentary elections, in which the villagers of Varsány repeatedly backed a Christian Democrat candidate—but, as in Tázlár, high politics had little influence on local elections. The first mayor held office for eight years, and the most important changes in property relations occurred during those years. He was followed in 1998 by another independent, a man with considerable organisational experience whose wife is one of the shopkeepers in the village. He is considered to be primarily a representative of the non-agricultural entrepreneurs in the village, but his appeal to a wider constituency was demonstrated when he secured re-election in 2002.

Changes in property relations were also more obvious in Varsány than in Tázlár, because much less land was in familial use (though almost everyone had had some access to a household plot). The first step in the dissolution of the TSz came in 1992 when one of the neighbouring villages withdrew, with its land. All TSz assets were meticulously valued and then distributed to members. Since the dairy branch was unprofitable, cattle were sold off first. Some cooperative managers were ready to buy these animals with their shares. The distribution of shares was determined by a formula that, unlike Tázlár's, took account of only two factors: assets originally contributed and work undertaken, or, more precisely, the income paid for that work. Later, buildings, machinery, and other property of the cooperative were also sold for shares. Those who wanted to build up private farms were able to buy shares from others, below the nominal price, to obtain the equipment they needed. Managers of the former cooperative were in a good position to obtain the most desirable goods. Those who held onto their shares were finally able to dispose of them in 2002, under a state-supported scheme that did not extend to members of the survivor cooperative.[5]

Land distribution followed somewhat different principles. The process started in 1992, when the cooperative assembly decided to give up its farming operations. The decision was implemented in 1993. Members were

[5] As a result of this process of compensation, a state-financed bank became the majority shareholder in the surviving cooperative.

allowed to take out the amount of land they had brought into the organisation, together with an additional amount, which again depended on the work they had done (length of service, position, and salary were the decisive criteria). Allocations were measured according to the value of the land in golden crowns (*aranykorona*). This opened possibilities for calculated scheming, especially in securing fields that had been improved by the cooperative with a drainage system. Managers of the cooperative and members of the various committees, plus their relatives, were, as in Tázlár, well placed to come out on top, at least according to local rumour. However, the wish to obtain exactly the plots that one's parents had cultivated was weaker in Varsàny, and some people attached greater importance to the proximity of their land to their homes. The descendants of kulaks had little chance of regaining their former possessions, because their compensation vouchers reflected only a fraction of the original value of their land.[6] Some preferred to use these vouchers to acquire other valuables outside the village. The reorganisation of village property relations lasted several years. The last land auctions were held in 1997.

The outcome of the process has been a structure of farming in both villages that, as can be seen in Table 4.3, is not so different from the situation before the land reform of 1945, but without large estates and with a great increase in micro-holdings (plots under 0.6 hectare, that is, the size of a former household plot).

In Varsány, the owners of all 14 larger farms (between 6 and 60 hectares in size) are registered as agrarian entrepreneurs (*vállalkozó*). Five of them rent additional land and farm a total of nearly 100 hectares, considerably more than the former holdings of the kulaks at the end of the 1940s. Most of these agrarian entrepreneurs occupied second- or third-rank managerial positions in the TSz, and this background seems to be a more important explanatory variable than the property status of their families before 1960. Most villagers, however, have insufficient land to support a family. They produce for their own consumption and engage in some marketing as an additional source of income, just as they did on their household plots under socialism. Unlike in Tázlár, in Varsány all fields are cultivated. With 335 small-scale producers (*őstermelők*) registered in 2002, it is difficult to find families without a link to land. The exception, as in the past, is the Gypsy population, which has grown significantly.[7]

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[6] For a contrasting case study, in which ex-kulak families were highly successful in regaining their former holdings, see Thelen n.d.

[7] Although more local Gypsy women took up jobs after 1990 in a new candle factory, many male Gypsy factory workers lost their jobs and became unemployed. Few were successful in making a living by trading, though many tried.

Table 4.3: Farming Structure according to Surface Area, 1935–2000

Village	Year	Number of Farms by Size in Hectares								
		0–0.6	0.6–3.0	3–6	6–12	12–30	30–60	60–300	Over 300	Total
Tázlár	1935	84	235	176	152	144	54	27	4	876
	1949	37	262	214	169	75	11	2	—	770
	2000	243	243	74	66	51	15	11	—	703
Varsány	1935	82	131	41	10	19	7	5	1	296
	1949	14	220	98	16	7	1	—	—	356
	2000	185	153	27	10	4	3	2	—	384

Note: Data for 1935 and 1949 have been converted from cadastral holds into hectares. Data for 2000 have not yet been published by the Central Statistical Office, and we are grateful to Iván Oros for making them available in comparable form.

The major producers specialise in cereals, maize, sunflowers, potatoes, or so-called 'small seeds', while a few still try their luck with cattle husbandry. Their cropping patterns resemble those practised by the TSz. The small producers focus on more labour-intensive plants, in order to extract as much as possible from their limited possessions. They may experiment with cabbages or cucumbers and grow pumpkins for their seeds. Women commonly grow raspberries in gardens next to their houses, and many raise rabbits. As in the later socialist period, these small-scale farmers do not keep cows. Large- and small-scale producers also differ in their access to subsidies and information. All are served by a conscientious 'village master', who tries to inform everyone about their rights and possibilities as these are announced by the Ministry of Agriculture, but the larger farmers are in a stronger position when it comes to subsidies for machinery investments. The former TSz managers also have much better knowledge of supply and marketing opportunities than do genuine new entrants. The exact legal status of a farm may also play a role. For example, five Varsány households, each with a full-time, professionally qualified farmer in the family, registered as 'family farms' *(családi gazdaságok)*, which entitled them to additional benefits.

As in Tázlár, the village cooperative survived its collapse, but in a much attenuated form. It has a new name and a new property structure, but it

continues to occupy the headquarters of the old TSz, and some villagers still refer to it by this old name. Each member of the new-old cooperative remains the private owner of the land voluntarily pooled for common cultivation. The farming cooperative pays rent for the land it uses, but it cannot offer work to all its members. The cooperative cultivated only 250 hectares in 2002, a fraction of its former territory, and only 15 people worked for it (5 of them in management and administration), compared with approximately 130 before 1990. Wheat and sunflower seeds were the only products grown in 2002; there was no animal husbandry. Members of this new cooperative are not compelled to give over all their land for common cultivation, and even the president has his private cucumber plantation. The members try to preserve some of the collective spirit of the socialist institution—for example, in the organisation of a harvest festival. Unlike its socialist predecessor, the new cooperative offers no services to other inhabitants of the village. The larger farmers sell their products through new 'agribusiness' channels, and as in Tázlár, they have replaced the socialist institution in assisting small farmers with machine services. More significantly, they provide more jobs for local people, both permanent and seasonal, than does the surviving cooperative.

Other employment opportunities in the village are limited. Apart from the village administration and educational institutions, there are 35 non-agricultural entrepreneurs. As in Tázlár, the economic depression of the early 1990s was severe. In Varsány, too, it is difficult to measure the exact rate of unemployment, but an official figure of 20% in 1995 had fallen to 12% of the active population by the beginning of the new millennium. These figures hide the fact that many villagers opted for earlier retirement when their place of work ceased to exist. Women between 50 and 55 in this position often sought temporary jobs on distant agricultural estates. The harsh conditions of this work and its organisation in work groups caused them to liken the so-called two-week contract (*kéthetezés*) to the *summás* work of the pre-1945 period. Men tried to find work in Germany and to bring back a car, lorry, or money to invest in an enterprise. One of the pub keepers built a huge house with a large cellar restaurant from the salary he earned during a protracted stay in Germany. Picking (some preferred to say 'digging out') asparagus in Germany was a common seasonal job for both men and women in the late 1990s.

Some of the non-agricultural entrepreneurs have been successful. Their educational background is diverse, but all have experience outside the village as drivers, workers, or traders. They typically combine activities such as transportation, pub keeping, shopkeeping, and organising groups of labourers for the construction industry. One diversified in 2000 into buying up

raspberries from other villagers and selling them to a cold storage plant. Many households combine independent entrepreneurial activity with some participation in wage labour. These efforts 'to stand on many feet' (*sok lábon állni*) resemble the enforced *pluriactivité* strategies of smallholders in the past. For example, the church sacristan attempted to supplement his small salary by acquiring an oil press and building a large storehouse for sunflowers. He regularly hired the storehouse out for wedding parties, but because he was unable to invest in refining the oil, his business collapsed after two years.

Most households were unable to start an enterprise, and their life strategies have not altered significantly. Every morning, about 120 to 150 men leave the village for construction work in and around Budapest. Others try to find jobs in the nearby towns, but even if they are lucky, the wages are low and one such income does not suffice to raise a family. The extra demand for labour in the harvesting period is mostly met by such workers, who take their holidays in order to accept more intensive but better-paid work.

As a result of this industriousness, Varsány gives the visitor a favourable impression, with its asphalt streets, gas-heated houses, and sewage system completed in 2002. It looks like a case of highly successful transition. The houses are in good condition, the people are well dressed, and almost every family has a car. Yet there is evidence of a considerable decline in consumption. Very few adults now visit the three pubs, a common way to spend leisure time before 1990. In comparison with Tázlár, and also with the earlier socialist period in Varsány, the construction of houses has decreased rapidly. This difference, illustrated in Table 4.4, confirms what local people themselves often say: that available capital is now more likely to be invested in starting enterprises than in homes (the level of housing in Varsány, measured by the number of rooms per house, has been consistently higher than in Tázlár). Most of the 34 houses built after 1990 in Varsány fall into one of two categories. Rich entrepreneurs built houses in a new style on a new street of the village—'where the Ewings live', according to local humour, with reference to the popular *Dallas* television series. The other large category comprised houses built by Gypsies with the aid of state subsidies.

Table 4.4: Number of Dwellings by Date of Construction

Village	1960–1969	1970–1979	1980–1989	1990–2000	2001
Tázlár	894	92	150	99	95
Varsány	607	117	103	84	34

A growing polarisation is evident in Varsány. Rich non-agricultural entrepreneurs have lifestyles utterly different from those of the land-bound majority. These entrepreneurs try to bring up their children to continue the business. The major agricultural entrepreneurs share the work and the way of life of the majority, but they are usually isolated in their families. Their wives and children often have non-agricultural education, along with jobs or aspirations that differ accordingly. There is little sign that the large-scale private farmers will find successors within their families.

At the opposite end of the scale, a few old or disabled people are genuinely poor and dependent on assistance from the village council and/or relatives and neighbours. For the majority, the previously mentioned multiple-income strategies enable people to muddle through somehow. The possession of land provides an important source of rental income for those too old or otherwise unable to farm it themselves.

Village social bonds remain strong. They continue to be expressed in compulsory, exactly calculated prestations at weddings and in mutual assistance in work tasks around the home and in the fields. Education continues to work to decrease social distance: by the end of the twentieth century, virtually all pupils proceeded to some form of secondary vocational or grammar school. As under socialism, girls still tend to reach higher educational levels than boys, but as in Tázlár, the proportion of children proceeding to higher education remains small.

Conclusion

The changes that began in 1989 opened up a new phase in rural Hungary's 'great transformation', but it is important also to recognise the continuities over longer time frames. In contrast to the modernisation of the western European countryside, here technological revolution was linked to the abrogation of substantive private property rights. Hungarian collectivisation was pursued in a more flexible way than most variants, and productive interaction between large-scale actors and rural households was encouraged. Al-

though investments were concentrated in the collective sector, the success of these modernisation policies brought long-term benefits to rural families, transforming their income-generating strategies and massively raising living standards. The reimposition of a predominantly private property regime on the agricultural sector has been detrimental to economic efficiency. Both villages have relatively poor soils, and in Tázlár in particular, production has fallen sharply as a result of unfavourable market conditions. Many households have had to cope with unemployment.

Compared with the more representative case of Varsány, Tázlár provides an extreme example of Hungarian flexibility. There, it was possible under socialism for individuals to remain or become full owners of crucial means of production. Many took advantage of the opportunity to invest in vineyards in the 1980s, supported by their cooperative; this allowed them to expand their income by becoming owners of vines without having to become fully self-sufficient in the production process and in marketing. There was considerable wealth and income differentiation in Tázlár even before 1989, whereas in Varsány at that time the inequalities derived largely from people's holding different positions in the organisational hierarchies of socialist institutions (collective farms and state-owned factories). There is evidence of polarisation in both villages in recent years, but it is still too early to speak of a new class structure. There is an emergent stratum of entrepreneurial farmers in both villages, but no evidence that it can be consolidated in the next generation. Intra-familial succession is, however, more common in non-agricultural small businesses. The great majority of households combine several sources of income, including subsistence production, and are far removed from sociological models of the polgár (citizen-bourgeois). Many have intensified efforts to increase income through 'self-exploitative' pluriactivité, which has a long tradition in Hungary (Laki 1997). But the options are less profitable nowadays than they were in 1960–90.

In both villages, land has lost its former significance as the prime marker of wealth and social status, but this does not mean it has lost its importance altogether. The restoration of private property rights has given some elderly persons a steady source of rental income, but in Tázlár, unfavourable market conditions and the relative abundance of poor-quality land have weakened the impact of land redistribution. For the majority of Tázlár households, agricultural activities serve primarily subsistence goals or add only minor sums to household incomes. The vineyard sector has the greatest economic significance, thanks largely to the investments of the later socialist years. Yet even there, only a handful of producers has so far invested in the equipment and storage facilities needed to make them effective competitors in this volatile marketplace. The cooperative still plays an important role in

helping small-scale growers to dispose of their harvest. Over the next decade, the large-scale vineyards of the 1980s will become less productive and need replacement. It is difficult to see how that can be organised, but it is conceivable that a new structure of private entrepreneurs will come to dominate the sector.

In Varsány, private farming had to be built upon the ruins of the producers' cooperative. There was great loss of accumulated wealth in the form of machinery, buildings, and materials, but knowledge accumulated in the large-scale organization proved useful to a few successful entrepreneurs. The agricultural output of the village as a whole has fallen, as have yields. At the same time, the new economic freedoms have made village economic life more variegated, with many new private businesses and shops. The privatization of former consumer cooperative buildings led to a similar increase in 'colour' in Tázlár, but the changes there seem smaller in comparison.

Both villages have seen a shift away from production and towards other forms of property. Modernisation processes have been fuelled by a consumerism based closely on urban models. Even in the periods of greatest repression under socialism, village houses in Hungary remained overwhelmingly in private ownership, in contrast to the dominant forms of social ownership in the towns. The main trends of the later socialist period have continued. In the postsocialist countryside, as in the towns, people tend to spend more time at home in front of the television. Young people hear the same popular music at their discos, and the tastes and aspirations of this age group seem little different from those of their urban counterparts. But there remain big lifestyle differences for most of the adult population and, indeed, for many children.

So long as farming plays a significant role in assuring subsistence, the family remains a productive unit. This has many consequences; for example, the proportion of rural families taking summer holidays is much lower than in the towns. The rural sector offers a subsistence lifeline, important enough to attract some urban families to settle in these villages in the 1990s, though they had little prospect of regular employment or of starting commercial farms. But in other respects the rural sector has lost the security it previously enjoyed, because uncertainty in agricultural markets has been compounded by the disappearance of jobs in the nearby towns.

The state's safety net has remained in place, and the great majority of households with no active earners have pensions to fill that gap. But even when more than one pension is received, total cash income often comes out below the state's stipulated minimum wage. Many families have trouble making ends meet. They speak about unemployment and the high costs of medicines as a deterioration of rights or entitlements, to which they had

become accustomed in the later socialist years. In this sense, even many of those whose (inflation-adjusted) incomes have not fallen at all have experienced a decline in perceived *életszinvonal* (literally, 'level of life'). The expansion of private property rights and the right to articulate opinions freely in the postsocialist period have therefore to be weighed against the decline in public entitlements—property rights of a different order—to which socialism had attached higher priority.

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Chapter 5

Coping with Economic Devastation Agriculture in Post-War Knin, Croatia

Carolin Leutloff-Grandits

Between 1991 and 1995, Serbs and Croats fought along national lines over the so-called Krajina, the southern parts of Croatia originally inhabited by both groups. In Knin, the Croatian population was expelled during Serbian occupation of the territory between 1991 and 1995, and the Serbian population in turn fled after the Croatian army reconquered the territory in August 1995 (see Mappes-Niediek 1995). Five years after the end of the fighting, the region's economy, both industrial and agricultural, was still marked by heavy devastation. The ongoing resettlement of the town and the region after August 1995 was soon paralleled by steadily increasing unemployment rates. By 2000, unemployment stood at more than 60%.

With the re-integration of the territory into the Croatian state, the town of Knin was re-inhabited by some 3,000 returning Croats and 9,000 new Croatian settlers. Beginning in 1997, increasing numbers of Serbs returned as well. Most of them were elderly, and they returned mainly to the villages around Knin, because Serb houses in Knin were now occupied by Croatian settlers. In 2000, Knin had a population of more than 16,000—about the same as before the war. This influx of people into the Knin region occurred despite the difficult economic situation. Conflict between Serbs and Croats was accentuated by the fact that the Croatian settlers occupied Serb property. In general, relations between the populations were marked by distrust and envy, which inhibited economic revitalisation.

The Croatian state and international organisations, concerned with rebuilding the region's economic base, began to promote the agricultural sector, because factories could not be expected to reopen in the immediate future. The hope placed in agriculture was supported by the fact that land in socialist Yugoslavia, unlike in most other socialist countries, was held mostly on a private basis. Following neo-liberal ideology, it was therefore assumed that agriculture could be transformed relatively easily into market-oriented production. But this development was slow. It soon became clear

that private landownership was not the only important factor in the transformation. Access and use rights to land were important, too. Land rights in themselves were of little use without cash resources, marketing facilities, and technical expertise. Social and political variables such as trust and solidarity within the communities, along with the ability to take risks and to be innovative, were no less crucial.

A useful distinction on which I draw in this chapter is Stephen Gudeman's (2001) differentiation between the 'commons', or base of a community, and the market. Under the former term he understands locally specified domains of value including shared interests, laws, practices, and customs, as well as identities ranging from the kin group to the nation. This communal realm puts collective interests before self-interest, the main motivating force of the market realm (Gudeman 2001: 7–10). Gudeman argues that the commons and the market are closely interrelated: 'No trade or market system exists without support of communal agreements, such as shared languages, mutual ways of interacting, and implicit understandings. ... The two realms may be institutionally or tactically interwoven' (2001: 11).

In this chapter I explore the relationship between market and commons for the agricultural sector in post-war Knin, where values exhibit distinctive inconsistencies. By looking in turn at a socialist cooperative, subsistence-oriented agriculture, and market-oriented agriculture, I highlight different spheres of community relations—spheres in which community values may conflict with both personal economic interests and the collective goals of the nation.

Pre- and Post-war Economic Conditions around Knin

The town of Knin is situated in the central Dalmatian hinterland of Croatia, not far from the Bosnian border (Map 5.1). Until 1991 the region's population was predominantly Serbian, but a considerable part was Croatian. Interethnic marriages were common, and Serbs and Croats hardly differentiated each other in everyday practices, such as those in the realms of subsistence and market-oriented economic behaviour.

The soil in the area overlies primarily limestone and is only partly suitable for commercial agriculture. Still, into the 1960s, agriculture was the main source of income, which made for difficult living conditions. Under the socialist regime, the region was industrialised, and a few large factories became the main sources of employment (Rašeta and Pajić 1986). In most households, at least one member worked in a factory in town. As elsewhere in Croatia, household-level agriculture did not entirely lose its meaning but

took the status of secondary employment (Brkić and Žutinić 1993; Žimbrek, Žutinić and Par 2000). This was possible because only relatively small amounts of land were nationalised during socialism. The greater part stayed in private ownership (*privatno vlasništvo*) (Borić 1996; Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry 1994: 9). Still, the ownership pattern was not promising for private agriculture: the average farming household in Croatia owned about 2.7 hectares of land in fragmented parcels (Denich 1978: 30; Žimbrek, Žutinić, and Par 2000).

Under socialism, agriculture became based to some extent on agricultural cooperatives (*Seljačke radne zadruge,* later called *poljoprivredne zadruge*) on socially owned property (*društveno vlastništvo*). Cooperatives were founded from 1945 onward all over Yugoslavia (Mataga 1995: 141–56) and were closely intertwined with private agriculture (Grandits 2002: 331–55). In the Knin area the agricultural cooperative, encompassing a few mainly Serbian villages, had been quite successful in the socialist period

(Đorđević 1989: 40; Rašeta and Pajić 1986: 52–53). It employed about 200 people, mostly Serbs, and also supported private farming. With the financial and logistical help of the cooperative, households could buy new machines for private production and could sell their products to the cooperative.

With the 1991–95 war, the region's economic base was almost completely destroyed. Factories were looted or devastated. On the heels of the war came more general problems during the postsocialist transition. The difficult economic landscape brought about an overall breakdown of the market; many processing factories and firms no longer operated (Žimbrek, Žutinić, and Par 2000). Under the new market conditions, ownership problems also arose. Few factories in the former war area had been privatised, and it was difficult to find investors to modernise them.

A similar picture of devastation can be drawn for the agricultural sector. Machines and livestock were stolen during and after the war, and the land was devastated (Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry 1996: 22–23). This affected private agricultural households but also the local agricultural cooperative, which was looted during military action and later taken over by new leadership. The symbiosis of private family farming and the agricultural cooperative was shattered.

People in the region of Knin employed several strategies to cope with the desolate economic situation after 1995. They often combined economic activities, which were situated partly in the state, private, and informal sectors and partly in international assistance. Different economic possibilities existed for Serbian returnees, Croatian returnees, and new Croatian settlers.

Most employees in the region of Knin, as in other war-torn parts of Croatia, were state employees, in either the police, the army, the schools, or the municipality offices.[1] Until 2000, however, these positions were made available only to Croats, both locals and newcomers. There was, nevertheless, a shortage of jobs.

The majority of elderly people, Serbs and Croats alike, relied on small state pensions, most of less than 125 euros per month, whereas the average monthly salary in Knin was about 300–600 euros. In general, social benefits were available, but Croatian settlers qualified more often than returnees, because recipients were not allowed to own property (houses or land). This excluded many locals from state social assistance. Nevertheless, a large percentage of the younger, unemployed population received social benefits of approximately 50 euros a month. This seems a small amount, but because each household member received these social benefits, a family of five easily received 250 euros.

[1] In the small private sector, basically only cafes and some small shops operated in Knin.

Returnees—especially Serbs, but also increasingly Croats—received humanitarian assistance from international organisations in the form of 'starter packs' including beds, mattresses, stoves, kitchen utensils, food, livestock, agricultural tools, and seeds, as well as in the form of economic incentives such as loans. Receipt of humanitarian assistance was based on either social criteria such as a monthly income of less than 125 euros or criteria of pre-war residence and ownership of land or other real estate in the locality. Ownership was especially important in order to receive a loan for starting a business or enterprise. Croatian settlers could partly rely on humanitarian assistance organised by the Catholic Church and other private Croatian institutions, but this was meagre in comparison with the assistance offered by international organisations.

A considerable part of the population was also active in the grey economy. This included the trading of foodstuffs and all kinds of other goods bought tax free in Bosnia and sold for a higher price in Croatia. It also included being employed in local businesses without being formally registered. This happened especially in seasonal businesses such as construction work, which was one of the main fields of private employment in the region of Knin. Workers themselves were often not interested in being registered, because they received social benefits as a stable source of income from the state in addition to their wages in the private sector, which were mostly paid irregularly.

A small part of the population relied on migrant work, chiefly in Germany or other areas of Croatia and Bosnia. Like others who worked in the grey economy, many labour migrants were registered as unemployed in Croatia and received unemployment benefits while they worked in other regions or countries.

Finally, a large percentage of the rural population, especially local Croats and Serbs but increasingly Croatian settlers, relied on small-scale private subsistence agriculture. A small but increasing number of families were expanding their agricultural activities and taking up commercial farming.

These economic practices were often combined, but it should not be forgotten that they were based on different 'commons' of the community. First, there was solidarity towards one's own national group and discrimination against the other national group for state jobs. For example, many Croats did not welcome the return of Serbs because they believed the town's economic problems would only increase as a result. Croatian national solidarity, however, was not unbroken. There was also competition and jealousy among Croats, especially between newcomers and local people, over state jobs and other personal advantages.

Second, economic practices were based on informal networks of kinship that stretched out beyond the respective hamlet, village, town, or region and often extended even beyond state borders to family members who had emigrated. They also transcended ethnic borders, since inter-ethnic marriages had been common in the Knin region in the pre-war period. Informal networks of neighbourhood, friendship, and patron-client relationships partly crossed ethnic boundaries; they were built on everyday activities and on shared experiences, norms, and values. Throughout the rest of the chapter, I elaborate on these social relations in terms of access to and use of land and the economic development of agriculture.

The Disputed Appropriation of the Agricultural Cooperative

After the Croatian military operation and the re-integration of the region into Croatian state territory, major institutional as well as ownership changes took place in many factories and firms, which often had negative effects on the regional economy. The agricultural cooperative in the rural area near Knin was no exception. Before the war this cooperative was one of the leading Dalmatian agricultural institutions, with about 200 employees and 470 members. It operated not only in the agricultural sector but also in marketing and trade (Đorđević1989: 40). It was important for the economic development and social life of its five member villages.

After the flight of the Serbian population in 1995, the cooperative was taken over by four Croats who had not been members of it before the war. Only one was a local Croat from Knin and an agronomist; none of the others lived permanently in Knin, and none had an education relevant to the new position. The nationalist atmosphere still prevalent after the war enabled these people to become the successors of the cooperative. In early 1996, the group announced in a Croatian newspaper its wish to re-establish the cooperative and formally asked the pre-war members to answer this public call and put forward objections if they had any. The vast majority of the members, however, were Serbs who had fled in 1995. They had no access to Croatian newspapers and consequently no information about what was happening, or they were too intimidated to put forward an objection. No one answered the 'public' call. The succeeding legal transfer of management rights to the group of Croats included the management of a considerable number of buildings and real-estate holdings that belonged to the cooperative.

Between 1996 and 2000, the new management of the cooperative tried to start several agricultural revitalisation programmes. One of them focused on cattle breeding and milk production and was to include private farmers, a practice that pre-dated the war. While some cattle were placed in a coopera-

tive building nearby, milk cows were supposed to have been handed over to private farmers (in this rural area most of the population consisted of Serbian returnees, along with some Croatian returnees and Croatian settlers), and the milk was to be collected by a milk-processing factory in Split. But the factory in Split was late with its payments, if it paid at all, and few private farmers were willing to take cows for the production of milk. Others who took cows failed to feed them properly, and they stopped giving milk. In the end, the cows were collected from the private farmers and sold. The same happened to the cattle in the cooperative building. The project failed. Another programme focused on the reactivation of fish ponds for the breeding of trout, but it, too, met with little success. Meanwhile, the cooperative's land was being used less intensively; only part of it was put into the production of hay and grapes.

For carrying out limited agricultural activities, the cooperative had a few so-called employees. They were neither members of the cooperative nor permanently employed, and their work was unregistered. The only Serb working for the cooperative took care of its vineyards. Instead of receiving cash for his work, he was allowed keep 50% of the harvest for himself. He was unsatisfied with this arrangement, however, because he claimed that his earnings were too small in relation to the work and to the investments he had to finance himself. Unlike the managers of the socialist cooperative, the new managers perceived the organisation more as a private firm that had to make a profit, in part by exploiting its employees.

Legally, former members of the cooperative—again, almost all of them Serbs—had the opportunity to rejoin it. But they were treated like potential new members, who had to pay an 'introductory contribution' of about 250 euros, a lot of money in Croatia, especially in the former war zone.[2] It seemed obvious that the new leadership did not want former or new members (either Serbs or Croats) to be involved in the cooperative, because they wanted to keep control of the decision making for themselves. One can even ask to what extent the new management had any interest in agriculture at all. It was speculated, in this as in similar cases, that the new management wanted to use the cooperative's real estate as collateral for other, private economic negotiations. This impression gained even more weight after the director spent a few months in prison in 2000 for dubious economic transfers.

For these reasons, even the Croatian municipal council of Knin and the nearby municipal council of Biskupija (in which most of the land and some buildings of the cooperative were situated) stopped supporting the new

[2] Former members had already made a financial contribution when they joined the cooperative in socialist times and refused to pay a second time.

cooperative management, despite their being Croats. Each municipality hoped to become the administrator of all buildings and land situated in its jurisdiction as soon as the cooperative could be permanently dissolved. The municipalities' lack of support for the new Croatian management and the competition for ownership rights were demonstrated in the municipality's handing over a 20-hectare parcel of the cooperative's land in a good location to the families of two Croatian soldiers who had applied for state land. This transaction caused an open conflict between the municipal council and the new cooperative leadership, and the latter took legal action against the municipality of Knin. Feelings of Croatian solidarity, which until that time had been directed against the so-called Serbian aggressor, seemed to have diminished, and mistrust and competition within the Croatian national group seems to have developed. Indeed, other Croats who had (re)started farming did not attempt to join the cooperative but used other services and networks for producing and selling their agricultural products.

The greatest impediment to the cooperative's progress, however, was the lack of cooperation between it and the former members. In the villages, a group of 'activists' was established, which wanted to regain control over the cooperative. The group consisted of some of the approximately 50 former members who had returned to the region by 2000, all of them Serbs. Among them were five engineers as well as the former leader of the socialist cooperative, who was the spokesman for the group.[3] The group was rather small and consisted of many elderly people, reflecting the ages of most of the Serbian returnees. Many of them saw the reopening of the cooperative as an incentive for the return of their younger relatives.

Distrusting the new management of the cooperative, the activists blocked any economic project it put forward, whether economically feasible or not. Instead, they proposed the re-establishment of the cooperative according to pre-war practices.[4] They claimed that the cooperative had been very successful in terms of 'eco- and ethno-production' of agricultural goods, such as the production of high-quality local ham (*pršut*), wine, and trout, which before the war were sold in local restaurants and stores and in

[3] He was well respected, not only within the Serbian community but also by many Croats from the region. Unfortunately, he died in the spring of 2001, and it was very difficult to find a substitute for him.

[4] Different attitudes towards the functioning of the former cooperative and its productivity existed in the socialist period, which influenced attitudes about ways in which to restart it in the postsocialist, post-war period. This was aggravated by the fact that it was difficult to receive reliable information about the cooperative, because its documents were no longer accessible. Although the activists saw the cooperative as having been the key institution for the development of the village in the socialist period, others were more critical about its productivity in the agricultural sector.

bigger towns all over Yugoslavia. Based on this specialisation and success in the socialist period, the activists had plans to reopen a cooperative that would support this kind of 'regionally traditional' production by offering agricultural machines, marketing, guarantees for the sale of products, and much more to private family farms. They were convinced that in the long run, at least ten people could be employed in the cooperative to manage the agricultural activities and develop marketing strategies and trading links. Just as in pre-war times, when more than 200 villagers were employed in the cooperative, in post-war years it was still attractive to villagers to be permanently employed by the cooperative, with a stable salary. Most of them were sceptical towards the entrepreneurial nature of private farming, although this did not alter their conviction that the cooperative would create more favourable conditions for private farmers, too.[5]

To reclaim management rights over the cooperative, the activists took legal action against the new management in the municipal court in Knin. They argued that the cooperative had been illegally taken over by the new Croatian leadership in the post-war situation. At the same time, they began lobbying for their own plan by building on different support strategies. On the basis of wartime and post-war experiences of national conflict and discrimination, they claimed they were fighting for 'ethnic rights', announcing that the cooperative would secure the return of Serbs to the area by supporting economic revitalisation. This strategy was put forward by the former leader of the cooperative, who, under the umbrella of the civil association called the Serbian Democratic Forum, pushed for its re-establishment. But although international organisations operating in the former war zones had developed a programme for assisting the re-establishment of pre-war cooperatives and were generally positive about the Serbian activists' project, they were unwilling to get involved in legal struggles at the time. The dispute over management rights was still unresolved in 2001, blocking efforts towards economic revitalisation.

Not only ethnic and international organisations showed sympathy for the activities of the former Serbian members. On the basis of the cooperative's good economic performance in the socialist period and personal connections between its former leaders and the Council for Cooperatives in Dalmatia (Savez zadruge Dalmacije), after the war the council offered them help in re-establishing the cooperative. Still, no concrete action followed. Friendships based on personal and work experiences in the socialist period conflicted with the national solidarity still dominating the public, which

[5] Compare, for the Zagreb area, Kovačić, Juračak, and Žutinić 2000: 6. This was not an ethnic phenomenon but could be found in other parts of Croatia as well.

prevented Croats from publicly fighting for the rights of their former Serbian partners and friends.

The takeover of the cooperative can be seen as a result of ethnic competition and conflict between Serbs and Croats, in which Croats dominated the scene. Behind the rhetoric of national solidarity and conflict, however, we can also see personal economic interests on the part of the Croatian successors—interests that strengthened neither the economic base of the community nor the perceived Croatian national group. Not surprisingly, in the years after the takeover, they failed to find partners for their cooperative and got into conflict even with the local Croatian authorities.

The Serbian activists, too, based their claims on ethnic arguments, but at the same time tried to establish a cooperative that would operate for the benefit of the local population. They had some strong supporters on their side, but the unresolved legal problems continued to be an insurmountable impediment to revitalising the cooperative. The new leadership kept the power to manage the cooperative but remained relatively inactive.

Agriculture

Because in the socialist period private farming had benefited from and partly even depended on the agricultural cooperative, especially for the marketing of products, the economic failure of the cooperative after the war affected household-level agriculture on private plots, too. There were now fewer state purchasers, and the market chain had been interrupted. For example, after the war it was impossible to sell milk in large amounts, because the milk-processing factory in Knin was no longer in operation. A winery in the town of Sibenik, about 50 kilometres from Knin, was still buying grapes from private farmers, but the price had fallen considerably. Wine and grapes, as well as milk, cheese, eggs, meat, and vegetables, could be sold only privately to friends and neighbours and sometimes to other individuals, mostly Croatian traders or restaurant owners who bought directly from the villagers or at the market in Knin.

In the context of family farming after the war, Serbian and Croatian returnees and Croatian settlers all operated under certain broad structural constraints, many of which were not peculiar to the post-war years but were the heritage of the socialist and even the pre-socialist period. Despite the existence of private property rights in socialist Yugoslavia, land was highly fragmented and legal ownership was often unclear, which impeded market-oriented agriculture. This situation, in turn, was a legacy of the centuries-old partible inheritance system and social organisation of agriculture, in which several brothers shared ownership rights to agricultural land and often worked it together (Kaser 2000; Leutloff n.d.).

Croatian settlers faced severe problems over land, because they did not hold title to it but received only use rights.[6] These rights were either bound to the use rights of the house the settler occupied or were independent of the house but limited to three years. Both forms of use rights were insecure, as the house and land could be reclaimed by their owner, and a period of three years was too short for larger investment plans. Furthermore, land allocated to Croatian settlers was difficult for them to use, because the plots were very dispersed and the boundaries between plots were seldom marked.

Still, some Croatian settlers had better access to land than others. Depending on their role in the Croatian 'homeland war' against the Serbs from 1991 to 1995, Croatian veterans were entitled to ask for ten hectares of agricultural land owned by the state as compensation for their military service and as a means to start a living after being demobilised. For this land they were to be granted ownership. In the Knin region, ten hectares was a large amount relative to the usual one or two hectares per family. Croatian settlers who received state land for agricultural purposes therefore had a great advantage over the local population. In practice, however, it was difficult to receive such land, because its distribution was poorly organised and the legal procedures took a long time. By 2000, only the families of the two demilitarised soldiers mentioned earlier had managed to receive full title to their allocated land. Others still struggled with the procedures.

Irrigation presented another problem for most farmers, as it had in the socialist period as well. In many rural parts of former Yugoslavia, no water pipelines existed. Because of high temperatures and rare rains in summer, well water was limited, too. People had to get water from springs or from the river to irrigate their fields. In the post-war period this was even more difficult, for many families had no water pump.

Agricultural machines were generally in short supply; most of them had been stolen during the war. In the village of Biskupija, for example, there were 4 tractors in 2000, whereas in 1990 there had been about 100 for 250 households. Local Serbs and, to a certain extent, local Croats got some equipment, such as small tractors, from international organisations. Furthermore, they generally had the possibility of taking out loans for agricultural machines, because they owned land and could use it as collateral for a mortgage. But many did not dare this, or else were not granted loans for various reasons.

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[6] Hann (1998: 6) distinguishes between inclusive and exclusive property rights. Whereas exclusive property rights are generally bound to private ownership, inclusive rights are more flexible; they may allocate access and use rights to property objects as social or public entitlements (Hann 2001: 5–7). In this case the entitlement is based on nationality.

Croatian settlers had even more limited access to machinery and livestock (most of the latter had also been stolen during the war), because without ownership documents for property they were ineligible for state loans. Additionally, they received almost no agricultural assistance from international organisations, most of which gave aid only to inhabitants who had been registered in the Knin area in 1991.

Labour, too, became an issue after the war, when the great majority of local families found themselves with a smaller workforce at their disposal. Especially among the Serbian population, and to a lesser degree among Croatian returnees, many young family members did not return. In pre-war times, more distant family members who lived in the town but not in the same household sometimes helped in the harvest. After the war, elderly people often had to work their fields alone, which of course was less effective than the pre-war practices of joint, multi-generational family labour. Unlike the local population, most of the Croatian settler families were relatively young and had several household members, and therefore a larger available workforce.

Altogether, the post-war constraints on agriculture meant that far less private agriculture was carried out than before the war. Serbian and Croatian returnees often relied on the vineyards, a traditional form of agriculture, and had only a few vegetables in their gardens. Still, especially for Serbian returnees, family farming and household-level agriculture gained value in some respects. It was often their main source of subsistence. Only a small percentage of families, either Croat or Serb, tried commercial farming.

For Croatian settlers, it was even more complicated to take up agriculture. Unlike locals in the rural settlements, many settler families did not use land at all. Others restricted their agricultural activities to subsistence-level farming such as small-scale gardening, the holding of a cow, and the breeding of some pigs and chickens. They often used the land situated next to their houses, although they did not necessarily have use rights to it. Generally, they saw themselves as occupying a worse position than Serbian returnees, because of their more limited access to land, machines, and loans. Still, some of the settlers, especially those who received ownership rights to land based on their soldier status, managed to engage in market-oriented production as well.

To further explain these differences between subsistence and commercial farming, a closer look at the social and economic dimensions of agriculture in the post-war period can be helpful. Starting from the perspective of Serbian returnees, I offer three case studies to explain the social and economic meaning of land and agriculture in post-war Knin, as well as the role of social networks, trust, and cooperation.

Family Farming and Community Networks

Milan, a Serb about 60 years old in 2000, had worked for some 25 years before the war as a cook in a restaurant of the agricultural cooperative.[7] He had lived with his adult son and daughter in a private family house in a village near Knin, next to his three brothers. His wife had died, and his daughter and son worked in the largest factory in Knin. Together with his brothers, Milan owned about two hectares of land, on which the men planted wheat, corn, potatoes, and grapes, assisted by Milan's children. Furthermore, Milan had 40 sheep. Private agriculture had served as a means of subsistence for the household as well as a source of extra income.

During the Croatian military operation in 1995, Milan, his children, and his brothers fled to Belgrade. He and one of his brothers returned in 1997–98. After their return, Milan was unemployed but approaching the age of a pensioner. His brother already received a Croatian state pension. The two other, younger brothers, as well as Milan's son, were still in Belgrade in 2000. One of the brothers found a good job and managed to build a house in Belgrade. He had no intention of returning to Knin, but he did not want to sell his house and land there, because he felt emotionally connected to his home.[8] Milan's daughter moved to Canada and had no intention of returning either. She found a relatively well-paying job in Canada and had no aspirations to the family property. Milan's third brother and his son found only occasional work in Belgrade. They wanted to return home as soon as they could find jobs in Knin.

Because of the war and the difficult economic situation in Knin, this family, which until 1995 had lived together in the countryside and had cooperated quite closely, was now dispersed in three countries. Only Milan and one of his brothers continued the family tradition, living in their home village and working together on their land. They earned some cash with a horse with which Milan offered services such as the ploughing of vineyards to neighbours. Although they could barely live on their agricultural products, they sent home-made wine and *raki* (schnapps) to their relatives in Belgrade and even to Milan's daughter in Canada. In return, the daughter occasionally supplied her family members in Belgrade and Knin with cash.

This example shows that although family patterns changed considerably after the war, kinship relations were still important for agricultural work, consumption, and the household economy, and they reached beyond the

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[7] I have changed personal names.

[8] Hann (1999: 198) describes another case in which attachment to land is linked to sentiments of group identity and belonging.

micro-family. This applied not only to Serbian returnee families but also, to a lesser degree, to Croatian returnee and settler families. Before the war and even more so after it, because of forced migration, these kinship networks encompassed trans-local or even trans-national relations: family members in villages still sent agricultural products to their relatives in towns and distant places, even when there were state borders in between. Although the quantity of agricultural products sent was surely less than in pre-war times—because agricultural production was limited and transportation costs high—it supported the household economies of many families who were short of cash.[9] Furthermore, one can argue that the social and emotional meaning of home-made products increased. Reciprocity between relatives stabilised social relations (see Sahlins 1972), created sentiments of and connections to home in places of exile, and (re-)established ties to the home community.

Agricultural work itself reached beyond the household, depending heavily on networks of kinship, neighbourhood, and friendship. For labour-intensive work that had to be done quickly, such as the slaughtering of a pig or the harvesting of grapes or hay, relatives, neighbours, and friends all participated, as was the habit before the war. Often the family in need of assistance announced the day and time and tried to coordinate with potential volunteers to ensure that they would have time on the day in question. After the job was done, the housewife offered the workers a rich meal consisting of soup, salad, roasted potatoes, and lots of meat. Generally, this was done without a special announcement, because it was expected that the volunteers would be supplied with food after having worked for the family, especially when they received no wage. Furthermore, the volunteering guests could expect the help of the host family when it came time to harvest their own fields. Apart from economic necessity, the shared work was a reaffirmation of the personal bonds between families and individuals. It served not just an economic but also a social purpose, re-creating personal networks within and beyond the village.

Interestingly, even after the war such efforts included people of different ethnic affiliations living together in one village. Generally these families had been used to sharing work for decades. During my field stay in 2000–2001, however, I observed almost no cases in which Serbian and Croatian returnees exchanged work with Croatian settlers. These settlers shared no common local (family) history with the returnees. Most importantly, they did

[9] As described by Halpern (1968: 304) for socialist Yugoslavia and by Konstantinov (2001) for Bulgaria, villagers' providing food to relatives in towns was a widespread phenomenon. Generally, relations between relatives in villages and towns continued to function (see Denich 1978: 34) and were important for the organisation of life.

not share the same everyday practices and family traditions of exchanging help.[10]

In 2001 I observed another local-level institution that supported the social security of villagers. When the cow of a poor but highly esteemed Serbian villager died, a Croatian friend of his went house to house to collect money to assist him. He visited all of the Croatian and Serbian returnee households, and everyone who was able to do so made a contribution. Later I heard that no one wondered about this act, because it had been the habit in socialist and most likely in pre-socialist times, too. However, the local Croat did not visit the Croatian settlers in the village. The tradition of village solidarity, regardless of ethnic affiliation, was still so strong that the settlers were perceived as outsiders.

Cooperation between Serbian and Croatian returnees that had an even more direct economic impact can be seen in their responses to the programmes of the international organisations. One example is especially striking. A powerful international organisation in the locality of Knin began to distribute agricultural machines and livestock and to make very favourable financial loans for the opening of enterprises. The organisation aimed to strengthen the local economy and at the same time ease tensions between local Serbs and Croats. It asked that ethnically mixed village councils be founded to encourage interethnic cooperation and make the decision-making process more democratic. Furthermore, the organisation wanted its donations and loans to be repaid in work, thus creating employment for other villagers. Croatian settlers were not considered for these projects, because they were, according to the policies of the international organisations, supposed to return to their homes in Bosnia.

The ethnically mixed village council, consisting of Croatian and Serbian returnees, was easily established. The council members worked so well together that they managed to grant seven loans of 10,000 euros each—an incredible sum for any family in the area—for the opening of local businesses. Three of the loans went to 'Croats' (one recipient had a Serbian wife, and another, a Serbian mother) who were either on the village council or were close relatives of council members. The other four loans were allocated to Serbs.

[10] Although I observed this where I conducted fieldwork, it was not the rule for all villages in the former war zone. In the Knin region, most local Serbs and Croats did not fight against each other (although they were incorporated into the Serbian or Croatian armies). In villages where extensive ethnic violence occurred against neighbours, reconciliation was far more difficult to achieve, and contacts between Croatian returnees and Croatian settlers might have been established much more easily.

This sort of interethnic solidarity could be found in other cases, too. For example, a local Croat managed to receive an expensive agricultural machine from an international humanitarian organisation by promising that with it, he would help many other villagers, Croats as well as Serbs. Almost no one asked for his help, however, and the few who did had to pay a small fee. Nevertheless, the Croat did not lose his reputation in the village, because in addition to the machine he got for himself, he managed to organise a herd of goats and sheep that went to many village households (although the machine had much greater value than the animals).[11] Reciprocity, then, did not have to be balanced in the village but could be generalised—it was more important that village solidarity be shown.[12]

Still, there was less solidarity in the village than there had been in the socialist period. Although the shortage of machines and young relatives created a greater demand for solidarity, labour, especially in combination with the rental of machines, often had to be paid for in cash, since the elderly inhabitants were unable to return the favour in work. With the diminishing of such reciprocity after the war, and with the higher valuation of money transactions, agriculture was additionally limited. Only a few villagers could in fact afford to rent machines. To avoid such costs, villagers relied mostly on their own manual labour and restricted their agricultural activities. I also observed that local Serbs tended to buy services and products from Croatian settlers, rather than from local Croats, because they were cheaper that way. By contracting with settlers, they could rely solely on formal economic criteria, creating no personal connections and thus no obligation to return favours.

Relations between local Serbs and Croatian settlers differed fundamentally from relations between local Serbs and local Croats, among whom interethnic solidarity and cooperation were slowly re-established. As I have outlined, this process was supported by international organisations, which at least until 2000 generally excluded Croatian settlers from their programmes because of their lack of landownership or registration in the locality before the war. In this way, on the local village level a gap between locals and settlers, independent of ethnic or national affiliation, was deepened. The Serbian side especially lacked trust in the Croatian settlers, because the latter occupied Serb houses and land without regard for private ownership rights.

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[11] Approaching the end of the year, the international organisation had to spend its funds and was not very critical in distributing donations.

[12] Interethnic cooperation was a very important issue for the international organisations. Croats in the village therefore became indispensable for Serbs and vice versa.

The Road to Market Production

Not all families used their agriculture only for subsistence; some tried to sell their products on the local market for cash. This had been true before the war as well. Still, many placed no trust in agriculture as a stable way to make a living but used it rather as a survival strategy at times when it was impossible to find a permanent job.

I observed this kind of market-oriented engagement in agriculture in a hamlet near Knin where three brothers, all Serbian returnees between 30 and 40 years of age, shared a household with their mother, two wives, and children—altogether, ten persons. All three brothers were unemployed after the war, and they worked together on their private land, growing tomatoes, carrots, cabbage, potatoes, lettuce, and other vegetables. The household received free seedlings and a small tractor from an international organisation, and the brothers managed to buy an old car to transport the vegetables to the market in Knin. There the women sold the vegetables every Wednesday and Saturday. Although all household members had worked their private land in pre-war times, too, agriculture played a more serious role for them after the war, when it became their only source of income.

Still, the family had to cope with difficult conditions for agriculture. Although they could use as much land as they wanted, including their neighbour's, the plots were fragmented. Most of the agricultural work, done manually, was very labour intensive. Most strikingly for me, the family did not have a pump for irrigation. Its members had to fetch water in buckets from the nearby river, which was exhausting work. They explained that they would not dare take out a loan to buy a pump, because they feared they would be unable to pay it back, and in any case they did not believe in the future of agriculture but awaited jobs in the state sector. This opinion was based in part on long experience during socialism, when agriculture was never more than an income supplement (cf. Brkić and Žutinić 1993), and perhaps even on pre-socialist conditions, in which people lived poorly from agriculture. But they also feared they would fail because of the insecure political and economic situation after the war, in which Serbs especially were discriminated against.

Not everyone shared this pessimism towards agriculture. Some Croats and a few Serbs tried to intensify agriculture and shift to specialised market production. One important step in this direction was the establishment of personal relations with better-positioned Croats—relations that reached beyond ethnic and community borders—as well as with international organisations that made loans or gave humanitarian assistance. Although these families were relatively successful in their economic performance, the shift from subsistence farming to market-oriented agriculture was not without

problems. Some of the families had to fight tensions within themselves and within the local community. These tensions were based on 'traditional' thoughts about agriculture, which were difficult to overcome, especially for the older generation. They were also based on the heavy work load experienced by family members and on the challenge commercial farming, in its contacts with outsiders, offered to village solidarity and work reciprocity. Furthermore, machinery and money for investments had to be provided, something the majority of people were unable to do. Let us look at an example.

Zoran is a Serb, about 30 years old, who returned with his wife from Belgrade to his home village near Knin in 1997. His parents, with whom the two shared a household, had returned a little earlier. Zoran was lucky and managed to find work as a driver for a local construction company that, financed by an international organisation, rebuilt war-damaged houses. He became the 'right hand' to the head of the construction firm, who had a powerful position in Knin. Zoran's father was an electrician who had been employed in the local factory before the war but who became unemployed afterwards. Now he, too, was partly employed in reconstruction. Neither Zoran's nor his father's work was registered.

The two women stayed at home. While Zoran's wife was responsible for the work inside the house, such as cooking and washing, but also for helping in agriculture, Zoran's mother was responsible for the animals (chickens, pigs, and turkeys), the vegetable garden, and other small agricultural duties. After work, Zoran spent his free time, together with his parents and his wife, in the vineyard and the fields.[13] For the harvesting of grapes and the slaughtering of pigs, friends and relatives joined them to help.

In 2000, Zoran began to plant peppers as a cash crop. He got the idea from some Croatian farmers in a nearby village who had started producing peppers for the market in 1996. In the spring, Zoran built a small greenhouse for the seedlings. In May, he and his wife planted the seedlings in two small fields, one near their house but the other about two kilometres down the valley, by a small river, reachable only with a small tractor. From June onward he had to irrigate the plants every second day. For the field situated next to the river, Zoran could fetch water with a pump. For the field next to his house, he had to fetch springwater from about three kilometres away. For this he used his firm's truck, which he could take home after work. In this way, his agricultural activities depended on the combination of jobs—an exhausting situation. To irrigate, he began every second morning at five

[13] This division of labor was quite similar in socialist times, when men were engaged in agriculture as secondary employment after work, and women, especially the older generation, often stayed home to take care of the animals and the household.

o'clock with his mother (or in the evening with his wife); between seven and eight o'clock, he started his regular job. The agricultural work was demanding for his wife and mother, too, who helped him grow and irrigate the pepper plants. For harvesting, Zoran relied most heavily on his wife's assistance, but also on that of his mother, father, and other relatives. The selling of the peppers was done mostly by his mother, who went house to house in the village. For the whole family, pepper production was a heavy load of extra work.

Luckily, the outcome was worthwhile. Zoran was satisfied with the amount of money he earned and regarded the future positively. He bought a tractor with the money he saved and had plans to further develop his vegetable production, with the goal of making himself independent by shifting to agriculture as a full-time job. This calculation was based on the fact that his position as a driver for the construction company depended on international financing for Knin, which was most likely to be finished in the following two years. It was also based on the consideration that he had no contract with the company he worked for, although he was responsible for coordinating the reconstruction process on the ground. Still, his relationship with his boss in the local firm became increasingly close, and because of his important position as the driver distributing construction material, he could rely on a network of people in the community and even among the international organisations in Knin. These manifold connections enabled him to make his next move.

Zoran learned of a European Union economic revitalisation programme in which sustainable projects would be granted up to € 25,000. When he decided to apply with his pepper production project, a friend who was employed in an international organisation helped him develop the project description. He elaborated a business plan and stressed that he would be able to employ other people as soon as he could work at a market level. To reach this goal, he applied for a greenhouse, a machine to irrigate the plants, and some other equipment.

At home, his family received his plans with great scepticism. His mother was overloaded with work and struggled with health problems after the exhausting summer of pepper production. His wife was not enthusiastic about their becoming a full-time farming household, because this did not enjoy a high reputation (cf. Žimbrek 2000: 4). Like her mother-in-law, she was unhappy about her large share of work in the vegetable production. The strongest objections came from Zoran's father, who was convinced that no one could make a decent living from farming. No one, he said, had done this in socialist times, much less in pre-socialist ones. In his experience, farming was always associated with exploitation of family labour, with meagre

results. The local villagers, too, reacted negatively to Zoran's ambitions. They accused him of being unsociable and miserly, as he had little time to join them in social activities.

Nevertheless, Zoran applied for the EU grant and was finally successful. In the summer of 2001 he received machinery valued at € 25,000, and in 2002 he began planting and harvesting peppers and melons on a much larger scale. The effort was successful, and he became 'the' agricultural entrepreneur in the village. Inside the community, however, his success was observed ambivalently. It aggravated people's negative feelings towards him as unsociable and tight, but people also admired him for his achievements and his strength in finding a way out of the generally miserable economic situation.

Zoran's success can be taken as an example of 'good practice', in which a young Serbian man with a family and no chance of employment in the state sector managed to become an agricultural entrepreneur. He was willing to learn and invest, although he had little previous experience in agriculture. He had the courage to innovate despite the negative reactions of his family and neighbours—a difficulty many young people were unable to face. This courage and self-confidence, however, were based on his good position and social connections as a driver for a construction firm, in which he received respect from Croats, too.[14] At the same time, he was supported by his family and finally got the necessary financial assistance through his personal contacts in the international sector.

In the Knin area, Zoran was the first Serb who tried to be innovative and who had the means to take up commercial farming. As previously mentioned, a local Croatian family and a few Croatian settler families were the first to try agricultural production for the market. For Croats, the reasons to engage in market-oriented agriculture were similar to those of local Serbs. Like Zoran, they had been employed in other sectors before the war and became unemployed afterwards. The region's poor economy offered them little hope of finding regular employment, and they turned to agriculture as a mode of living, often immediately after returning or settling in the community. Although the number of local Croats and settlers who began farming commercially was small, those who did used larger amounts of land than Serbian farmers in 2000–2001 and could live from agriculture as their main

[14] To have connections was also the basis of economic success in socialist times (see Denich 1978: 32). The importance of having connections for starting an agricultural enterprise is also stressed by Hivon (1998), who describes the transformation of the agricultural sector in Russia. Although new forms of private farming might increase conflict inside the community, to rely on good relations with villagers and to meet the concerns of the community could be crucial factors for being accepted by other villagers.

source of income. At the same time, they faced problems concerning loans, landownership, and the sale of their products. By looking at cases of local Croatian farmers and farming Croatian settlers, we can see that for the establishment of commercial farming, not so much nationality but connections, cooperation, and information were decisive.[15] Market-oriented farmers even competed against each other for land and loans.

For example, Ante is a Croat, about 45 years old, who returned with his family (mother, wife, son, and daughter-in-law) to his house in the region of Knin in 1995. The whole family started vegetable production on some fields that were, together, larger than one hectare. Although Ante was content with the outcome of their work and convinced that they could make a decent living from agriculture, he told me how difficult it had been to begin. All the farm machinery had been stolen during the war, and replacing it required a substantial investment. Furthermore, there were high investment costs at the beginning of each year, such as for seedlings, which were difficult to finance without a loan. Still, he managed to buy a small truck in which to transport the vegetables to the coastal towns for selling, and a pump with which to irrigate.[16] But with only one pump, he was restricted to working a small amount of land.

Other problems were based on the fact that Ante owned very little land in highly fragmented parcels. Therefore he used the land of Serbian neighbours who had not yet returned.[17] The owners had allowed him to work the land by verbal agreement, but Ante felt unsafe because his use rights were not secured; the owners could decide to return at any time and use the land themselves. Furthermore, local people generally did not like to rent their land, even when they were absent and had no plans to return. They were proud of their landownership and felt connected to the region by holding land as property.

The fragmented land structure was typical for the region, and the difficult access to water created problems for farmers. Therefore, Ante was eager to obtain a share of a 50-hectare plot of fertile, unfragmented land with access to water that was under the management of the agricultural cooperative. In this way, he competed with the new Croatian leadership of the cooperative as well as with some Croatian settler families who either had already

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[15] Bruno (1998: 183) shows for Russia that information is often treated as a secret that is accessible only through a network of friends and acquaintances. This links the availability of information back to social connections and cooperation.

[16] Ante sold the vegetables in the nearby coastal towns because it was a problem to sell them in Knin. The selling was both time consuming and exhausting, because he had no one to organise it for him.

[17] Because land was fragmented and few local farmers had bigger, unified pieces of land, it was also difficult to acquire use rights for a larger piece of land.

gotten a share of the cooperative's land or had applied for it. He argued that the cooperative would leave most of the land unused, and so the municipality should divide it among private farmers; three to four hectares would be enough for one family to work on. Referring to two settler families who had already received ten hectares each of the cooperative's land, he maintained that the land should be given to local people and not to outsiders and newcomers. Generally, he seemed to have better contacts with his Serbian neighbours than with the Croatian settlers, and he emphasised this by stating that he employed more Serbs than Croats in his field for harvesting.[18]

This example shows that the 'commons' Ante recognised was based not necessarily on his nationality but at least in part on communal solidarity between neighbours and local residents. While he competed for land with the few Croatian settlers who had started commercial farming, as well as with the new Croatian management of the cooperative, he seemed to have no difficulty cooperating with Serbs on questions of land, machines, and workforce, since these Serbs were oriented only towards small-scale subsistence agriculture. At the same time, family farming demanded a high degree of self-organisation, as the state and municipality seemed to be absent in supporting market-oriented family farmers.

Let us now briefly look at the economic activities of the two Croatian settlers, Mladen and Marinko, who each received ten hectares of the cooperative's land and began commercial vegetable production.[19] Compared with local returnees and other settlers, these two families owned much more land, and it was even held in one piece. This might have been one reason for their willingness to innovate. They were the first to cultivate melons, peppers, and cucumbers in large quantities under nylon, a system new to this part of Croatia but more common in their home regions in the Croatian Pannonian Plain, where vegetables had been produced for the market for a long time. Furthermore, being outsiders they did not have to fight 'traditional' values inside the kin and village community. However, being strangers in the region, neither could they base their economic activities on the commons of the community and kin group.

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[18] This practice could also have had economic reasons: the Serbs Ante employed were all neighbors and friends, and because of this relationship, their work could not be clearly measured in wages per hour or day. For Serbs working in the fields of a Croatian neighbor, the re-establishing of social networks and relations of trust might have been a more important incentive than money. Furthermore, Serbs were more likely to be unemployed and therefore expected less pay than local Croats or Croatian settlers in the community.

[19] Again, it has to be taken into account that Mladen and Marinko were the exception for Croatian settlers rather than the rule. Other Croatian settlers obtained only use rights for Serbian land.

Thus, things developed less easily than Mladen and Marinko had planned. First, they had problems obtaining ownership rights for the state land, despite the law that allowed them to receive ten hectares. The difficulty arose partly from the fact that they had to find eligible land without help from the municipality or the state, and partly from the fact that the procedure for getting ownership papers (*darovina*) was slow. Only in 1999, three years after they applied for the land, did they receive it from the Croatian Ministry of Agriculture as a gift. In the first three years, from 1996 to 1999, they used Serbs' land, but because they were strangers in the area and unable to rely on relations of trust or friendship with locals, this involved considerable insecurity. After the Serbs returned and reclaimed their land, the two men had to argue with them and, in the end, find another plot.

In other aspects, such as marketing and investment, they faced problems similar to those of Croatian and Serbian returnees who embarked on market production (cf. Žimbrek 2000: 4–6). Mladen and Marinko had only limited machinery and funds for investment. Although they applied immediately in 1996 for a loan from the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry to buy a tractor and machines for nylon, they received the loan only in 1998–99. But the loan was not paid out in cash, and they had too little money for seeds, greenhouses, employees' wages, and other requirements. When they finally received their ten-hectare plots of state land in 1999, they could not use all of it but had to start with only three hectares. They also had trouble selling their vegetables in the local market in Knin, because they had no chance of competing with traders who sold products bought in other Croatian towns or in Bosnia for lower prices.

Recognising their weakness, Mladen and Marinko expressed interest in joining an agricultural cooperative, which would offer them advantages such as the buying of materials on credit and assistance in selling their products. In this way they hoped to reduce their risk and widen their economic possibilities. They were not interested, however, in joining the existing cooperative under its new Croatian leadership, because they were in conflict with it over land. Instead, they teamed up privately with local Croatian farmers, one of them Ante, who was also interested in market production. Only the Serb Zoran showed no interest in cooperation, after he received the grant that enabled him to work on his own.

Teaming Up in an Agricultural Association

In 1999, the American international organisation FLAG (Firm Level Assistance Group) entered Knin with the aim of promoting entrepreneurship and contributing to the region's economic revitalisation. After assessing the economic possibilities, its staff decided to focus on supporting agricultural

projects, despite the poor agricultural conditions they found. They recognised that the area was well suited for sheep and cattle breeding and planned to support the reopening of a milk-processing factory in Sibenik. They tried to organise ways to pick up milk from individual farmers along transportation routes, but they soon realised that few farmers had more than one milk cow—not only because milk sales were insecure but also because it was difficult to get fodder in the winter. The majority of farmers collected hay by hand, and the hay was of very poor quality.

The staff members at FLAG also recognised quickly that the agricultural cooperative that had been taken over by Croats was not well received by the farmers in the region. Therefore, they planned to found a new agricultural association in which farmers could cooperate in using machinery and selling their products. FLAG intended to buy a modern hay baler to produce a high-quality haylage,[20] as well as some additional machines that the farmers of the association could use in shifts (FLAG Croatia 2000). Members without the necessary tractor to use the hay baler would have to pay a fee to use another member's tractor. All members would have to pay a small yearly contribution for replacement purchases. In order not to discriminate against any group of people or to repeat the mistakes of earlier projects from which Croatian settlers had been excluded, the association was to include local Serbs, local Croats, and Croatian settlers, promoting interethnic cooperation and re-creating trust.

FLAG advertised the new agricultural association via Radio Knin, local newspapers, and local agricultural advisors. More than 80 farmers attended the first two meetings, and although most participants were local Croats, luckily all three groups were represented. Most of the interested farmers worked at the subsistence level only, and it was unclear what they really expected from the association.[21] Many focussed on non-specialised, 'traditional' agricultural activities such as sheep breeding, wine production, hay making, and the planting of corn and potatoes on a very small scale, and they were not much interested in this elaborate method of haylage production. Still, they hoped to profit in one way or another by joining the association—for example, through joint purchases of fodder and fertilisers, the sale of agricultural products, and the possibility of getting a loan. Even more interested in such advantages were the local Croats and settlers, altogether eight farmers, who had already started commercial farming, based mostly on

[20] The hay baler would roll the haylage into bales wrapped with plastic—an absolute novelty in the region.

[21] Compare the motives of farmers in joining associations as described by Kovačić, Juračak, and Žutinić (2000: 6).

vegetable production. They, too, however, took little interest in the haylage machine.

FLAG implemented its project anyway, but the hay baler was used by only 3 of the 80 farmers. None of the others had enough cows or sheep or large enough parcels of land for use of the hay machine to pay off. They seemed not to trust the new system of haylage production and had no money to pay for its services. The hay baler was stored in the building of a former collective sheep farm, now occupied by a war veteran who had moved to the region to begin farming. It was unclear what would become of the machine. Considering that the machine had cost over US$25,000, the project was, despite its good business plan (FLAG Croatia 2000), a complete failure. This was the moment when FLAG moved out of the region.

Still, the agricultural association was not dissolved. A few Croatian settlers took over its lead. They managed to give the association a positive image and convinced another incoming international organisation to finance some greenhouses for vegetable production, from which they and the local Croat Ante benefited.

Arguments among the members followed, however, because again, few of them profited from the international assistance. The gap between the subsistence-oriented farmers and those producing vegetables for the market was too difficult to bridge. When the leadership proposed in a later meeting that the association be transformed into an agricultural cooperative, open disagreements were expressed over the style of leadership and the different interests in agriculture. The only Serb who had been a member of the socialist agricultural cooperative near Knin was discouraged from telling about his experiences, because the management of the association claimed that the liberal conditions of a market economy could not be compared to the old socialist times. Especially for settlers active in market production, the break with the socialist past was also important in terms of defining a new 'commons' in which they could take the lead. Despite their many needs to cooperate, farmers found it difficult to do so in the post-war period.

Conclusion

In the desolate economic situation around Knin after the war, farming was one strategy, if a problematic one, for coping with the crisis. The preconditions of agriculture were, despite the private ownership of land, not at all promising. In Stephen Gudeman's terms (2001), the domains of the commons were fragmented and had to be reactivated, while the market had to be re-created under new, 'liberal' conditions. International organisations were inconsistent in their strategies for supporting agricultural activities. Gener-

ally, the equilibrium between the commons and the market was shattered in the post-war period.

The agricultural cooperative, which had been the foundation of the village community and its economic development under socialism, could not be economically reactivated after the war. It was taken over by a small group of Croats who used Croatian nationalist sentiments for their private economic interests. Although this was not appreciated even by the Croatian municipal council, the former Serbian members failed to regain management of the cooperative, and it brought no economic development to the community.

On the private level, most family farming was done in traditional ways. It was carried out on small, fragmented private plots and focussed mainly on subsistence. By reactivating mutual help and dependency within the family, the neighbourhood, and the community, it (re-)created networks of social security and trust. Through the sending of home-made agricultural products to relatives who emigrated after the war, family farming created networks among relatives in distant places and produced feelings of belonging to one's home locality. On the community level, family subsistence farming also bridged ethnic group boundaries. Besides sharing agricultural work, local Serbs and Croats teamed up to receive loans from international organisations and in this way profited economically from interethnic cooperation. A gap developed between locals and settlers, however, which was exacerbated by the economic programmes of international organisations and which became more powerful than ethnic boundaries.

Most inhabitants, Croatian and Serbian returnees and Croatian settlers alike, were convinced that private family farming could not be successfully integrated into the market economy and serve as a main source of income. This was based on their experiences of socialist and pre-socialist agriculture as well as on the general political and economic situation in post-war, post-socialist Croatia, in which economic insecurity seemed overwhelming.

Despite this general mistrust in agriculture, a small number of households from all groups tried to develop market-oriented agriculture. The conditions they had to face, especially concerning machinery, investment strategies, and marketing, were similar for everyone. Ownership of and secure access to land were essential for the development of commercial farming, and in order to obtain them, farmers had to move away from the commons of the nation and the values of the local community. Market-oriented production relied less on trust within the community and more on individual action. These farmers tried to use connections to local powerholders and to international organisations, and in this way they often crossed national group boundaries. Yet despite their similar strategies, the diverging

interests between market-oriented and subsistence-oriented farmers and lack of trust due to the recent war experiences inhibited the establishment of a new form of agricultural cooperative.

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Chapter 6

Private Farming in Romania
What Are the Old People Going to Do with Their Land?

Andrew Cartwright

In a recent joint report by the World Bank and the Romanian National Commission for Statistics, the authors concluded that 'the elderly were the main winners of the 1991 [land] reform' (Chirca and Tesliuc 1999: 38). Following the implementation of Law 18/1991, 'pensioner-led households' became the owners of two-thirds of Romania's agricultural land. And although by 1997 almost one-third of Romanians were living below the poverty line, 'for most of the rural elderly, access to pension benefits and ownership of land proved to be a sufficient shield against poverty risk' (Chirca and Tesliuc 1999: 32).

A consistent theme in the literature on postsocialism is the inability of established analytical models to explain current phenomena and predict future developments. *X* should have led to *Y*, but it did not, and it is not quite clear why. A good example of this is the relationship between private property and economic development, particularly the belief that private ownership would form the basis for economic recovery and growth. A recent review of agricultural conditions in central and eastern Europe is a good illustration of unforeseen trends. The author, a respected agricultural economist writing for the European Commission, found that

> we are confronted with the following double paradox, the elucidation of which is the major key to understanding competitiveness and forecasting agricultural production in the central and east European countries.
> 1. Despite the extremely low labour productivity of semi-subsistence agriculture, its place in the production and even more in the agricultural employment of the candidate countries has seen a significant relative and/or absolute development during transition. ...
> 2. Despite structures *a priori* much more favourable to total factors' productivity, and therefore to competitiveness ... the production of

> the 'modern' agricultural sector, i.e., major company and individual holdings, has tended to stagnate at a low level per hectare, or to decline. (Pouliquen 2001: 37)

In other words, far from there having been a transition to a 'modern' agricultural sector, there appears to have been a return to a thinly disguised peasant mode of production.[1]

My aim in this chapter is use two case studies from the Transylvanian region of Romania to examine private ownership of agricultural land. The idea is to look not simply at who got the land and why, but at what ownership of land might mean in practice. What did those who received formerly collectively owned land intend to do with it? In the second part of the chapter, I examine what these owners actually did with their land following restitution. Why did they act in the way they did, and with what consequences? The goal is to show how personal, familial, and local factors combined with wider changes taking place in the country. The chapter is based on fieldwork carried out on several occasions between 1996 and 1998 and in the summer of 2000.

I argue that ethnographic accounts of the agricultural transitions have several advantages for understanding postsocialist changes. First, they are able to supplement those official portrayals that register the composition of households, the amount of land supposedly owned, the main patterns of land use, and so forth with alternative accounts gathered through interviews, conversation, and observation. As the compilers of international reports frequently complain, many land transactions and working arrangements are made informally, without recourse to lawyers, state officials, or statisticians.[2] In this sense, activity, adaptation, and innovation are taking place at unknown levels and are not being accurately represented in the official discourse. Case studies may not necessarily be able to provide data on the actual extent of informal land sales, for example, but they can help determine some of the reasons for and the consequences of local practices. Second, by providing additional data on actual land practices, case studies offer a more layered approach to understanding property ownership, one that does

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[1] For sociological and historical analyses of agricultural developments in the region, see the Rural Transition series of the Centre for Central and East European Studies, University of Liverpool, at www.liv.ac.uk/history/centres/cee_pdfs/index.html, as well as research carried out by the Central and Eastern European Sustainable Agriculture initiative, www.ceesa.de/. For more economical analyses, see the special issue of *European Review of Agricultural Economics,* vol. 26, no. 3 (1999).

[2] See, for example, the European Commission's 'Agricultural Situation and Prospects in the Central and Eastern European Countries 1998' reports at http://europa.eu.int/comm/agriculture/publi/peco/index_en.htm.

not prioritize one dimension of ownership to the exclusion of others—for instance, its alienability as against its role as a kind of familial cement. Finally, case studies offer concrete examples of how historical considerations help explain current situations, in this case the ways in which attitudes towards agriculture, property, and village life in general were shaped by experiences under socialist rule.

The Case Studies

I visited Plăieşti and Mirşid in Transylvania to carry out fieldwork on the application of Law 18/1991. My aim was to study the impact of the law on property relations. Given the weakness of central authority in Romania in the early 1990s, my case studies were intended to provide a bottom-up account of one part of the postsocialist transition. I wanted to use them to see how far the pre-socialist past and, of course, the experience of socialist rule itself would affect the way the collective farm was dealt with. In other words, what might the local 'land question' be, and how would it compare with the land question as debated nationally? In some parts of Romania, the collectives had been dismantled in the first months of 1990. The village of Săpânţa, for example, in north-western Transylvania, achieved some international recognition when it declared itself a communist-free zone in the summer of 1990. In other parts of the country, the changes were less dramatic and therefore less well known. As one long-time researcher of Romania pointed out in 1993: 'Many of the state and collective farm workers feel threatened by the privatisation process, which may mean the loss of a secure job. Many of them do not want to take the risks inherent in private farming' (Turnock 1993: 7).

In terms of their histories, each case-study village was both typical and atypical of Transylvania.[3] Mirşid (pronounced Meer-sheed), in northern Sălaj County (see map), had little tradition of small-scale commercial farming. Up until the land reform of 1918–21, an aristocratic family, the Wesselényis, had dominated agricultural production and much of the local labour market. They owned thousands of hectares of arable land and forest, employing many villagers from the vicinity on their estate and renting out small plots to the handful of independent farmers in the village. Although most of their land, like that in other parts of the country, was redistributed after the First World War, the inter-war period did not witness the emergence of a

[3] Transylvania is distinct from other regions of Romania in terms of farming practices and, more importantly for land reform, in its traditions of private property. Comprehensive records of private property extend back to the mid-nineteenth century in Transylvania, whereas in other parts of the country the land registers are less well established. For a discussion of some of the consequences of this, see Verdery 2000. See also Verdery 1983.

strong, stable, middle-sized farming class in Mirșid. Indeed, the last of the barons bought back land from those who could not afford to pay him the compensation allowed under the law.[4] During the Second World War the village was occupied by Hungarian and German troops, and when it was clear that the Red Army would soon arrive, the baron and his family left for Hungary. In his absence, the family's land and assets were confiscated and its castle destroyed. In 1945, several hundred hectares of arable land were redistributed to those who owned less than one hectare. Until the collective farm was finally established in 1960, many households continued a small-scale agriculture while working in the nearby railways and metalwork factories in Zalău.

The second village, Plăiești (pronounced Ploey-yest), is around 200 kilometres to the south, near the old city of Turda. Its history offers a good contrast to Mirșid's. During the inter-war period, when many eastern European villages were suffering from poverty, under-employment, and over-population, the villagers in Plăiești were building their first public swimming baths, stocking their library, finishing the bowling alley, and producing their own newspaper. Some farmers imported the latest agricultural machinery, and in 1936 they held an agricultural show that attracted even visitors from abroad. The success of the village was in no small part thanks to the work of two Unitarian pastors, Ferenc Balázs and János Fikker. They helped Plăiești and several neighbouring villages set up a sophisticated and effective system of mutual aid. Under this system, known as Gazdakör, an organisation was set up for farmers to sell their produce, a credit union gave villagers access to affordable credit, and in the winter, short agricultural courses were put on by lecturers from the university in the county capital, Cluj.[5]

Members of numerous households in Plăiești can speak from experience of the pre-war village. Although for reasons that are not altogether clear, some of its initiatives had fizzled out by the late 1930s, almost everyone spoke admiringly of the achievements of Gazdakör. When I spoke with villagers, those who had been members reacted angrily when I referred to it as a cooperative (too close to the socialist farm) or an agricultural association (too close to the current successor to that farm). Perhaps the least controversial translation would be 'farming circle'.

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[4] Unlike subsequent land reforms, the 1918–21 land laws provided for expropriated owners to receive monetary compensation from those who received the land. For more on the problems of Romanian agriculture in the inter-war period, see Roberts 1951.

[5] Sadly, Balázs, who was probably the more exceptional of the two, died from tuberculosis in 1937, at the age of 37. His Danish-born wife wrote of their experiences in Transylvania (Fredrickson 1997).

Given these very different histories, one question for both villages was what effects these pasts might have on the fate of the socialist farm. For instance, in Plăieşti, would there be a revival of the kind of cooperation seen before the war? Would the limited experience of independent private farming dissuade villagers in Mirşid from totally dismantling the collective? What would be the impact of collectivisation itself on the reforms? Would it be possible to undo all those things that took place during the 1950s when privately owned land was transformed into collective property? The final set of questions concerned the impact of collective farming itself. How would it affect the way villagers dealt with the land? A series of ethnographic studies have shown how socialist rule brought profound changes to village life in Romania (Kideckel 1993; Sampson 1995; Verdery 1983). For David Kideckel, for instance, the system of collective farming corroded solidarity and trust between individuals. At least in the early 1990s, when he was completing the fieldwork for his book *The Solitude of Collectivism* (1993), his prognosis for rural recovery was bleak.

Postsocialist Land and Agrarian Reform in Plăiești and Mirșid

Despite the differences between Plăiești and Mirșid, the spontaneous land reforms of 1990 and the application of Law 18 in 1991 led to the creation of private smallholdings in both villages. The strength of feeling of some former landowners was such that dismantling the collective farm and returning the land was the only acceptable outcome. Yet theirs was not the only voice in 1990. In both villages, alternatives were proposed. In Plăiești, a former collective farm chairman was elected to the village land commission.[6] With some support he argued for the continued mechanised cultivation of the land, which would be achieved by redistributing land from one part of the collective farm to all those who wanted to rent out their land. For those who wanted to start private farming, he proposed that they receive plots from another portion of the collective's land. According to several villagers in Mirșid, a similar idea was put forward there.

In Plăiești, those who argued against this idea were a combination of families who had once owned medium-size to large farms and those who, during the socialist years, had left the village to work in the towns. Among the latter group, few envisaged actually returning to live in the village. For them, the land was a resource that they could cultivate for themselves or rent out for cash or products. The proposed division of land might have seemed to be in their interest, yet during the summer and winter of 1990, the majority were persuaded to side with those who wanted a restoration of the pre-collective land boundaries. The main argument of the former owners was that the only people who had the right to decide the fate of the collective were those who had originally contributed land, tools, and animals. Any attempt at a new, alternative land division was simply 'acting like the communists' and usurping authority, no matter how public-spirited the idea might appear.

Several of those with the 'loudest voices' in the early village meetings came from families who had suffered especially harshly during collectivisation. For this group, expropriation during the collectivisation campaign had been carried out with particular venom. Recent studies have understandably focused on the legal and illegal ways in which peasants were 'persuaded' to

[6] The village land commission was the lowest administrative body, in charge of hearing claims to land, drawing up maps, and measuring the new plots. All of its decisions had to be approved by a municipal land commission, with appeals on narrowly specified points going to a higher tribunal.

contribute their agricultural land to the new collectives.[7] The confiscation of family homes during collectivisation is less emphasised, even though for those targeted, much of collectivisation's injustice was experienced through their eviction from the family home. In Plăiești, one family's house had been converted into the headquarters of the farm, and another family saw rooms in their home allocated to poorer and, in their eyes, undeserving Gypsies. In one case in Plăiești, a bedroom and living room were converted into a stable. Evicted families were usually rehoused in very poor conditions. Alongside these losses was the humiliating memory of heads of households continually petitioning the authorities for better conditions, and the repeated rebuffs they suffered. These experiences helped create an almost irrevocable gulf of mistrust between these families and the authorities.[8]

The other side to the postsocialist land reforms was their effects on poorer families in the village. According to Article 18 of the law, everyone who had worked for the collective 'in any capacity' during its last three years was entitled to at least one-half hectare of land. If there was insufficient land to make up all the plots, then the village commission was entitled to create them by shaving equal proportions from the land of the former owners. In both villages, several former collective farm workers received less than half a hectare. Even when they did get their plots, they were the last to do so, and the plots were often on hillsides, in areas prone to flooding, or in locations where the soil was of poor quality. Almost all the elected land commissioners seemed to regard past labour as a weak justification for receiving a share of the collective's land. One common situation was that in which a previously landless couple both worked for the collective and claimed a half-hectare share each. In several cases, the wife was told that because her husband had been given a half hectare, there was none left over for her.

One issue that caused particular friction between villagers involved former collective land on which houses had been built. In the 1970s, Mirșid had experienced serious labour shortages. As wages and conditions deteriorated, fewer villagers wanted to work for the collective farm, and despite the efforts of its leaders and local party activists, the numbers working in the fields continued to fall. This was so throughout Romania, and the authorities responded by encouraging migration from poorer regions such as Moldova and the Apuseni Mountains. When such families joined a collective, they received land on which they could build a house and some arable plots for

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[7] For articles that document collectivisation and the responses of the peasantry, see the journal *Arhivele Totalitarismului,* published by the National Institute for the Study of Totalitarianism, Bucharest.

[8] For a comparison of land reforms in Bulgaria, see Giordano and Kostova 2002.

their personal use. In Mirșid, many who came at that time were Gypsies. Not only did the 1990–91 settlements deprive these people of their small personal plots, but in many cases, former landowners also sought restitution of or compensation for their land which had been allotted to the newcomers for houses and gardens. Although no one was evicted, the new owners were expected at least to pay 'compensation' to the original owners for their gardens. The legality of these claims was suspect, but the newcomers felt powerless to refuse. Those who could not afford to pay simply lost their gardens.

For those who began to farm privately, it soon became clear how difficult this was going to be. The initial enthusiasm for independent farming, especially among those holding medium-size plots, was tempered by the realities of ageing bodies, lack of capital, and agricultural machinery and very uncertain markets. Although the first postsocialist government was forced to accept land restitution as a fait accompli, in the first few years of transition it did little to reform agriculture for the benefit of the new smallholders.[9] The majority of subsidies went to state-owned farms. Small producers were able to gain access to grants or loans only via state-controlled intermediaries who bought produce at fixed prices, often below market prices. In Plăiești, where significant numbers of villagers had begun private farming, one major problem was simply the lack of alternative outlets for their produce. A great many villages in the area were trying to sell to the same markets. Larger buyers such as the South African–owned brewery in Cluj had more offers than they could handle. This difficulty was compounded by the lack of adequate storage space for harvested produce. In Plăiești, there were potential sites for storage. Gazdakör had built a barn, and another was added by the socialist cooperative. However, under Law 18, these assets had to be publicly auctioned unless there was a village-level successor to the collective. As there was none in Plăiești, one of the barns was sold to the local state farm, and the other to an individual from a neighbouring village.

The combination of few buyers and little storage space forced many to sell their goods themselves in the local market or to the state buying agencies, even though the latter might pay below market prices. The state buyers were constrained by government policy to hold down the price of basic goods. While villagers complained that they were getting sub-market prices, the state agents countered that even if they wanted to pay higher prices, the law did not allow them to do so.

A third obstacle for private farmers was their lack of agricultural machinery. During collectivisation, private agricultural machinery had been

[9] For more details on governmental agrarian policies in the 1990s, see OECD 2001.

confiscated and 'machine tractor stations' (MTS) set up to carry out mechanised work. In 1990, these MTS were privatised and began to hire themselves out to private farmers. The problem for the smallholders was that their land was often fragmented into several strips, making ploughing difficult and, for the tractor companies, cost-ineffective. In both villages, farmers admitted that after only one or two seasons the tractor companies had lost interest in selling their services to the smallholders.

In both villages, the majority of land is currently owned by people over 50 years old. Unsurprisingly, not of all these villagers had the resources or the inclination to farm privately. Although each household retained land for its own needs, most looked for opportunities to rent their land. In the early 1990ś, various bodies rented land from the villagers. In Plăieşti, the local state farm rented land as part of its farm diversification strategy. Every landowner was promised 800 kilograms of produce for each hectare he or she rented to the farm, although, as the director admitted, this figure was never reached in practice. Owners were more likely to receive around 500–600 kilograms of whichever crop was grown on their land. In Mirşid, landowners rented land to the company formed in the restructuring of the local machine tractor station.

Those wishing to rent their land had few real options. If they did not receive the promised rent, there was little to do but withdraw their land. When alternatives did become available, they turned out to be even worse. In 1994 in Plăieşti, almost all those who rented to the state farm, Babybeef, transferred their allegiance to another company. The latter promised to pay more than any rate Babybeef offered. In a public auction, the company's agent, a returning son made good, vied with the director of Babybeef for the rental contracts. When he promised 1,000 kilograms per hectare, the state farm pulled out of the contest. Subsequently, the company was unable to keep its promises, and in 1998 it was declared bankrupt. Its successor announced that it would rent only as much land as it could afford to work, which turned out to be 100 hectares fewer than before. By this time, Babybeef had secured the extra land it needed from another village. Despite the Plăieşti owners' petitioning both the company and the local mayor, their 100 hectares were still unworked in the autumn of 2000.

Cooperation and Local Organisation

Did cooperative arrangements emerge in response to the difficulties of private farming and securing regular income through renting? At first sight, there were few signs that this was so. In Plăieşti, for example, the lack of cooperation in 1990–91 led directly to the loss of property that might have been of benefit to the whole village, such as the two barns mentioned earlier.

The most telling illustration of the lack of trust between households concerned the sale of produce. For those growing vegetables in Plăieşti, as the majority of households did, there was a market in Turda, around 20 kilometres away, and one in Cluj-Napoca, some 40 kilometres away. Although most families grew the same produce and went to the same markets, there was little sharing of burdens. It was common to see elderly women heading for the market in Turda carrying a few bags of onions, peppers, carrots, or beans onto the twice-daily bus. Those prepared to travel for higher prices could go to markets farther afield. My host, for example, used to hitchhike to Sibiu, some 300 kilometers away. He would leave the house at four o'clock in the morning and, with his six bags of vegetables, stand by the main road until a lorry stopped. Once in Sibiu he would stay at the market until he had sold the lot. Only occasionally would he sell another villager's produce. Few villagers actually trusted others to do so. My host offered several reasons for this. The first was the belief that any villager offering to sell another's produce would always look after his own first. If any got damaged, for example, it would not be the seller's produce that was spoiled, but his neighbour's. The second reason was the fear that anyone selling on another's behalf would cheat the other by claiming to have gotten a lower price than he in fact did. Even though, as my host pointed out, there were many expenses related to selling—travel costs, market pitch hire, food and drink while waiting to sell, accommodation costs—most of his neighbours would, he thought, still believe it was worth making the journey themselves rather than trust another to do it.

In both villages, significant portions of land were unworked, yet in neither village was there any local organisation that could take over the running of the land. Beyond the problems of lack of capital, there seemed to be no emerging body that could organize such a venture. Those who had organizing experience from socialist days tended to keep to themselves. In Plăieşti, one surviving former farm chairman opened up a bar in the village, and another went into private farming until an accident forced him to retire. The assessment of one of the newcomers in Plăieşti was that his fellow villagers were always looking for opportunities to steal from each other. Although this was an exaggeration, it was common to hear villagers complain about theft of produce from their fields and even their gardens. Initially they would pin the blame on outsiders. In less guarded, more private moments, some conceded that they suspected their fellow villagers of the thefts.

Such stories fit well with images of peasants as mistrustful and self-seeking. However, it would be a mistake to pass off the two villages as full of cynical individuals who saw only profit in another's loss. Households did cooperate, even though the scales and types of activities varied greatly. One

important qualification is that this kind of cooperation was not always visible to an outsider. Within extended families and among neighbours in both villages, informal pooling of labour resources was common, especially around sowing or harvesting. Groups of smallholders did, infrequently, hire private tractors from the handful of villagers who owned them. A second qualification is that the villages had some quasi-representative bodies that negotiated rent conditions with the agricultural companies. Sometimes these were people who appointed themselves representatives of the renters; at other times it was a group of owners who took part in negotiations. These intermediaries were useful for those who wanted to rent land but who baulked at the prospect of dealing with tens or even hundreds of individual contracts. Third, landowners occasionally came together when faced with common threats, whether natural ones such as floods, droughts, or wild boars or man-made ones such as theft of produce from the fields. Success rates varied wildly. In some such cases, villagers successfully petitioned the local mayor and county authorities for compensation for losses. In the case of thefts from the fields, people met frequently in the street to discuss how to deal with the night thieves. In 2000, there was constant discussion of how the affected villagers might resurrect the old system of *paznic,* or night watchmen.

Abandoning the Land

Leaving the land was always an option for private landowners. In Plăieşti, among the first to lose interest in their holdings were those from outside the village. Gradually, the number of unworked strips increased. By 1996, the amount of uncultivated land was estimated at between 10% and 25%.[10] Attitudes varied. There were those who admitted that not all their land was worked with a 'what-can-we-do' shrug. Others, usually elderly landowners, found the agricultural company's decision to rent less land in Plăieşti both a mystery and a shock.

For the World Bank and the statisticians in Bucharest, the 'difficult policy problem' was that the elderly held more land than they could either work or rent out (Chirca and Tesliuc 1999: 33). At the same time, evidence showed that young farming households were suffering from having too little land. For the authors Chirca and Tesliuc, the solution was to try to match up the 'excess' land with the excess labour of the younger farmers. From another perspective, if so much land was 'available', then why was the land market so flat? This issue has been one of the enduring puzzles of the transi-

[10] This was below the figure of 30% that was estimated as the average for the county. *Adevărul de Cluj,* 12 September 1997.

tion. In terms of the numbers of laws passed and projects externally funded, a great deal of support has been given to help consolidate holdings and increase the number of medium-size farms. Yet as Pouliquen's double paradox, mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, highlights, the results of these efforts have been disappointing.

Both villages illustrate some of the difficulties of a land-market-based strategy of rural recovery. One practical problem relates to the unity of decision making regarding the land. Although titles often specified one owner, in practice there were usually others who were entitled to a part of the land. There were cases in both villages in which siblings were not named on the *titlu de proprietate* but were accepted by the family as joint or part owners of the inheritance. This was especially the case when the relatives lived in a nearby or sometimes faraway town or city. Restitution was a long process involving many visits to state officials. Usually, the family member in the village took responsibility for dealing with this process and securing the return of the family's land. When it came to the question of who would be named as the owner of the land, it was natural for this person to be the one. But in parallel to this official account, there were unwritten 'understandings' about how different family members' shares would be looked after. Sometimes the town relatives helped to work the land, and sometimes they simply expected their village relatives to secure them a good rent.

A second significant complication in the working of the land market was the attitude of elderly owners towards their children and younger relatives. Several elderly villagers believed they did not have the right to sell the land. They saw it as part of the family's patrimony, and as such it was for the benefit of their children, too. Breaking up the land would be tantamount to breaking up the family and ending the continuity between past and present generations. One problem for both villages was that the younger members of the family did not always see things the same way as their parents and grandparents.

In Mirșid, for example, a man in his sixties owned a very small amount of land. Before the Second World War, he and his wife had worked as domestic staff for the local baron. Later, they held various jobs in the collective farm, he as a driver and in the stables and she in the vegetable brigades. They owned their own house and had some land for personal use. In 1991, they received 50 *ari* in two pieces. Being neither skilled nor inclined towards private farming, they worked only a small portion of this land and rented out the rest. One part of their land, though, they reserved for their children, a son who lived in nearby Zalău and a daughter who lived just outside Bucharest. When the woman died unexpectedly, her husband was devastated not only by the loss of his wife but also by the recognition that his

children were not going to move back to the village. When he spoke of them, it was as if they had betrayed him, even though the daughter was desperately trying to arrange for him to move in with her and her in-laws.

A second example of intergenerational conflict comes from Plăieşti. My host's neighbour was an elderly woman with two sons. Her husband had come from one of the village's big families, and when the collective was dismantled he reclaimed nine hectares, which he started to work with one of his sons. By the mid-1990s, this family was one of the few in the village who owned their own tractor. In 1999, the husband suddenly died. By this time his second son had returned to the village, and although relations between the sons were poor, so long as the father was alive they had worked the land together.

According to the man's widow, the sons began arguing about the division of the land and the house only a few hours after their father died. It seemed that they argued continuously over who would have the house and how they would divide the land. Eventually they agreed that one son would take the house and half the land. He gave his brother some money for his share of the house and then told him never to set foot in it again. Their mother was told she could use two rooms in the house and that was that. She had 3.5 hectares of her own, although it was unclear whether or not this was her own inheritance. A year after this had happened, the widow was still in shock over what her sons had done.

Although this was an extreme example of a land dispute between generations, there were other cases in the village in which elderly owners feared what their children might do with the land and so did their best to maintain the integrity of the family's holdings. In one family, for example, the daughters had married men who had once worked in the towns but who were now unemployed. For them, farming was hard, unprofitable work, and they had made it clear that they did not see themselves working on the family's land forever. Their mother-in-law, however, held the title for the land, and she made it plain that she would allow no division of it in her lifetime, lest one of her 'lazy' sons-in-law decide to sell his share.

When I asked villagers in both Plăieşti and Mirşid about the local land market, one of the commonest replies was, 'What land market?' Some buying and selling took place immediately after the land reforms. Often based on handwritten contracts witnessed by neighbours, these sales were usually of very small plots that helped a household create a larger strip. By the late 1990s, despite the availability of more than 100 hectares in both villages, there were few large-scale land sales. In Plăieşti, families who moved into the village tended to have been forced to do so by redundancy or the higher cost of living in the towns. They could raise just enough money to

buy 30 *ari* of land and sharecrop another 20. Usually they had little background in agriculture and grew food only for their own needs. For other incomers, moving to a village was about retiring, as in the case of the company agent in Plăieşti who decided to return to his childhood home. Even the relatively successful producers—those who bought land, managed to consolidate holdings, and could afford regularly to hire machinery—were reluctant to go beyond a certain point. One family of three, well-known in the village as *harnici*—hard workers—admitted that they had recently increased their total to just over three hectares, but that this would probably be enough for them. In both villages, the few people who could be classed as entrepreneurs saw no advantage in accumulating large areas of land. In Plăieşti, one couple who inherited 12 hectares between them used only part of their land for growing vegetables, which were then pickled and sold in enormous quantities in Cluj-Napoca.

One final point to add about a land-market-based reform is the sheer cost of selling legally. The issuing of land titles was greatly delayed in Romania, and throughout the decade, many people simply relied on temporary papers when buying and selling land. Strictly speaking, such papers were insufficient as a base for the legal sale of land, and it was difficult to register any such sales with the national land register. However, villagers in both Mirşid and Plăieşti regularly ignored the official land register, on the grounds that it was costly to register land contracts (notary fees could be as much as a month's wage) and few could see much point in formal land registration anyway.[11]

Conclusion

There are two reasons why the question of the elderly and their land in Romania is important as well as timely. The first is that the majority can no longer rely on state support for their farming. Between 1997 and 2000, a scheme of voucher-based subsidies made a significant difference, many conceded, in the amount of land they were able to work. In 2000 the scheme was changed so that vouchers were given to those who actually worked the land rather than to those who owned it. In 2001 the scheme was further amended to differentiate between commercial and subsistence farms. The new law provided that only producers over a certain size could apply for subsidies. For cereal growers, for example, the minimum was 110 hectares; for fruit growers, orchards had to be at least 5 hectares; and vegetable growers had to have at least 2 hectares under cultivation. In both Plăieşti and

[11] For more on the relationship between state law and local systems of land exchange, see Cartwright 2000.

Mirșid, these changes made the great majority of landowners ineligible for state subsidies. In 2000, it appeared unlikely that the agricultural association in either village was in a position to absorb the extra land that might be made available by this switch in subsidy policy.

The second point is simply that many of these landowners are now very old. In Plăiești, according to the Agricultural Register of 2000, the largest landowners are all in their eighties. In both villages, significant portions of land are owned by heads of households over 70, and many households in Plăiești are made up of widows. Sooner or later, some decision will have to be made about what to do with the land. As the different examples show, there is some residual expectation that the younger generation may take over the land, and this will happen in some cases. In others it is not an option. One very elderly single woman in Plăiești asked if I knew how she could donate her land to the state.

It is tempting to add a third factor: the impact of EU accession on small-scale farming in Romania. Yet realistically there is little chance that EU policies will have any immediate effect on private farming in Plăiești or Mirșid. Although the accession and soon-to-be accession governments are free to make payments to farmers who work as little as 0.3 hectare of land,[12] the changes in subsidy regimes in Romania in 2001 show that the present government is unlikely to use this money for the benefit of semi-subsistence farmers. Moreover, EU funds are often directed to farmers through special initiatives such as producer groups. These are groups of farmers who join to market their produce together or to buy inputs or other services. There are many examples of such groups successfully raising the overall income of their members, but in order to succeed, they need a committed local organisation.[13] In Mirșid, where few households grow for the market, there seems to be no real need for such a body, whereas in Plăiești there is little sign of sufficient cooperative spirit to help form such a group.

What can ethnographic case studies tell about the future of private farming in Romania? They can help counter people's generalising over the enduring nature of the 'peasant mentality', particularly when it comes to 'the land'. There are villagers in both villages who continually demonstrate their mastery over their land, for whom hard work and self-sufficiency are central parts of their identity. There are also those who admit to very little interest in

[12] For in-depth accounts of the changing EU agrarian policies, see Wyn Grant's Common Agricultural Policy page at members.tripod.com/~WynGrant/WynGrantCAPpage.html.

[13] See the conference report 'Farmers Organizations in Central and Eastern European Countries and Their Role in Provision of Input-Output Services in the Context of Accession to the European Union' on the website of the Food and Agricultural Organisation's Central and Eastern European Office, www.fao.org/Regional/SEUR/pubs/.

their land. Partly, this last attitude was shaped by experiences during socialist times—the poor working conditions at the collective, the low wages and low status, the attraction of commuting to the new towns. It was also shaped by the economic environment of postsocialism—the lack of market infrastructure for small producers and the poor profitability of agriculture. Despite the statisticians' and the World Bank's seeking to match surplus land to surplus labour, in both villages the problem was not the lack of land but the value of agricultural work.

In Plăiești, most households rely in some way on agriculture, and so the question of the future ownership of land is difficult. Some plots will undoubtedly pass on to younger generations; others may be given to relatives from outside Plăiești. In some cases, elderly widows will die having made no formal settlement of their land. As in the cases of families who simply packed up, locked the front door, and left the village, these women's houses will remain empty, and their land, if it is unworked, will probably remain so. If it is rented to one of the agricultural companies, then the company will probably continue to work it, though now without the obligation to pay rent. In Mirșid, such developments can already be seen in fields on the outskirts of the village. Though the forest covers a substantial area above the valley, there are still large fields divided into many strips. As you pass on the road towards the centre, you can see uncultivated strips side-by-side with those still worked by their owners. In some fields, only a few strips show where someone is clearly cultivating the land.

Plăiești and Mirșid are only two villages in Romania, and it would be wrong to generalise too much from their situations. Nevertheless, I have tried to show how questions concerning the ownership of land offer a strong reflection of some of the difficulties of adapting to the postsocialist environment. The initial post-1989 freedoms gave some villagers a chance to reassert their independence. For others, the dismantling of the collective meant a huge drop in their standard of living. Even among those for whom land appeared to promise a decent income, everyday struggles wore people down to the point that more and more village land lies abandoned.

For many younger villagers, the last ten years of small-scale private farming have demonstrated that private agriculture does not pay. In Plăiești, younger men take advantage of their families' links to Hungary in order to find temporary work in Budapest, and few envisage returning to work on their family's holding. On a larger scale, the decollectivisation of land appears to have increased division in the village and mistrust among villagers. The frustration of the older farmers and their dismay over 'lazy' youths is exacerbated by inequalities between the land rich and the land poor, between those with adequate pensions and those without, and between those born in

the village and those from outside. These problems are more acute in Plăieşti than in Mirşid. Although Plăieşti was once the lead village in its commune, hosting the mayor's office, now it is relatively isolated and vulnerable in its dependence on agriculture. Mirşid, by contrast, is well linked to the two nearby towns that were built up during socialist days. Over half of its households have at least one member who works in the town. In interviews with approximately one-third of the village's households, only a handful of people admitted to being full-time farmers. For the rest, agriculture and the land were supplements to household income. Indeed, the mayor of Mirşid recently applied to the Ministry of Agriculture to have part of the village's agricultural land redesignated as land that can be built upon. That way, he argued, it would not be long before people from Zalău would start to build their retirement homes on land that was once 'abandoned'.

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Chapter 7

Property Restitution and Natural Resource Use in the Rhodope Mountains, Bulgaria

Barbara A. Cellarius

In this chapter I examine natural resource use following Bulgaria's postsocialist property restitutions, addressing forests as well as the more commonly studied agricultural land.[1] I report on recent ethnographic research in the central Rhodope Mountains and examine relevant restitution laws. Agricultural land in this region was largely restored by the mid-1990s, after being collectivised in the late 1950s, and forests were restored in 2000 and 2001, after being nationalised in 1947–48. In both cases, the restitutions were based on a principle that a report from the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) calls 'historical justice', in that they were intended to 'restore ownership and property rights to former (precommunist era) owners and their heirs' (OECD 2000: 16). Although preliminary, given the recent dates of the restitutions, this comparison of two types of property contributes to a more complete understanding of natural resource use and management in the postsocialist context. My analysis focuses on the consequences of these restitutions for the rural economy and for the management of natural resources. In other words, I ask, What has been the outcome of this return of private property?

Property restitution and subsequent property relations and regimes have received considerable attention from scholars of postsocialist countries (e.g., Cartwright 2001; Creed 1998; Giordano and Kostova 1999, 2002;

[1] This chapter is based on two years of ethnographic field research in Bulgaria. My research from late 1996 to early 1998 focused on rural resource use and economy following the agricultural land restitution in one Rhodope village. Subsequently, I studied the more recent forest restitution in several central Rhodope communities, with frequent visits in 2000 through 2002. Besides using the anthropologist's standard tool kit of participant observation and open-ended interviews, I surveyed 120 randomly selected households, about half the village, in the spring of 1997. Unless otherwise indicated, numerical data presented here are from that survey. These data were supplemented by interviews with officials involved in resource management and the restitutions, by historical research into agriculture and forestry, and by a review of relevant laws and regulations.

Hann 1993, 1998; Kaneff 1996, 1998; Kideckel 1995; Strong, Reiner, and Szyrmer 1996; Verdery 1994, 1999). Anthropological research on the topic, for example, depicts a long and complex process deeply embedded in social relations and the property regimes of socialism. Yet these works focus primarily on agricultural land, typically in lowland regions of intensive production, and occasionally on urban property. They rarely address other types of property, such as pastures or forests, or the specific resource management consequences thereof. For this reason, it is useful to consider briefly the literature about property in relation to such resources elsewhere in the world before moving into the Bulgarian case material.

Although scholarly discussions of property go back at least to the work of the seventeenth-century philosopher John Locke, it emerged as an issue for the environment and resource management in a particularly forceful way with the publication of Garrett Hardin's 1968 article 'The Tragedy of the Commons'. Subsequent work has refined the commons concept, clarifying in particular a difference between common property regimes, in which property is controlled by a group, and open access regimes, in which no person or group has exclusive control. The latter is closer to the tragic model described by Hardin, whereas recent research shows that common property regimes can, under some conditions, be effective and that private property systems do not necessarily guarantee sound resource management (e.g., Feeny et al. 1990; McCay 1992; McCay and Acheson, eds. 1987; Ostrom, Burger et al. 1999; Ostrom, Dietz et al., eds. 2002).

Recent work on property, especially that by anthropologists, political scientists, geographers, and other scholars interested in property regimes from the standpoint of their implications for resource management, goes beyond relatively simplistic classification schemes and invokes a variety of concepts that can be considered in analysing property rights and obligations with regard to such resources. These scholars often begin with the now almost commonplace observation that property relations are relations between people with reference to things, rather than between people and things (Hann 1998 and Hunt 1998 review the literature). Property rights are sometimes described as 'bundles of rights', which suggests a need to be specific about the rights and responsibilities involved and who it is that has them (Hunt 1998; von Benda-Beckmann and von Benda-Beckmann 1999). Haripriya Rangan (1997), for example, emphasises the differences between who owns and who controls property, focusing on several different varieties of state forests in a region of northern India. It is also important to consider the larger context in which the rights exist or are embedded (Hann 1998). Katherine Verdery (1999), for example, discusses the way in which uses of agricultural land in postsocialist Romania are constrained by factors such as

lack of agricultural technology for working it and lack of access to markets for the resulting produce. In an article about Africa a decade earlier, Sara Berry (1989: 41) similarly wrote that 'people's ability to generate a livelihood or increase their assets depends on their access to productive resources and their ability to control and use resources effectively'. She included in this access to labour. In other words, it is not just access to resources that is important but also whether one can successfully make use of them.

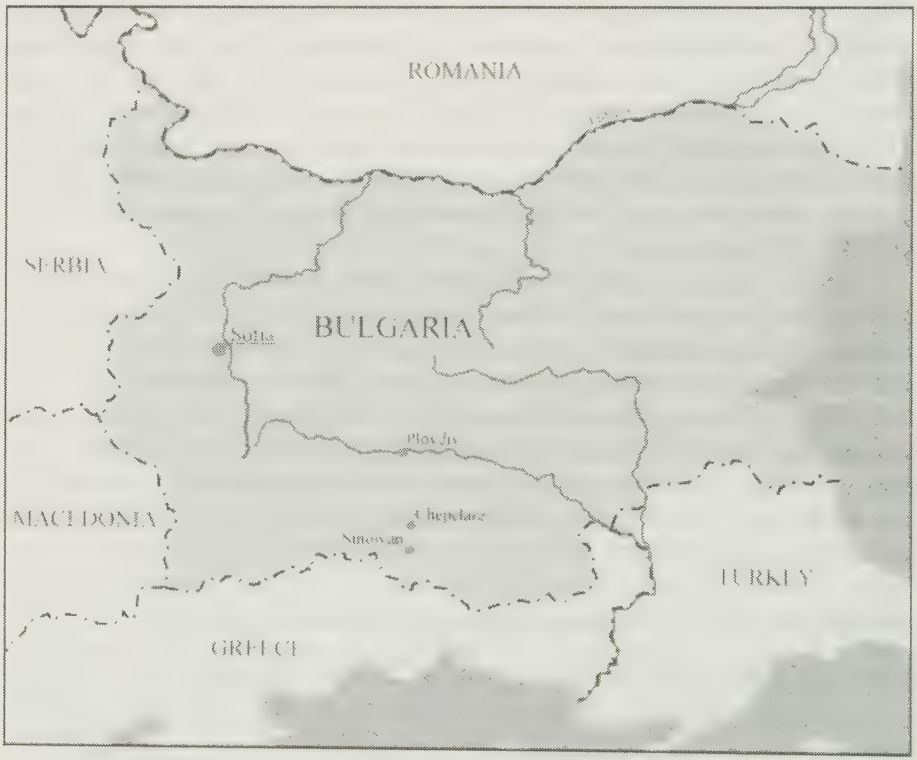
The nature of the resource can also play a role in the form that management takes. Factors identified as affecting the sort of ownership regime that is most efficient and thus perhaps most likely to emerge include the density and predictability of a resource, along with the ability to restrict access and enforce the division of the resource into individual parcels (Bac 1998: 267; McKean 2000; see also Peluso 1996: 514 on the characteristics of different tree varieties). On the basis of fieldwork in a Swiss mountain village, Robert Netting (1976, 1981) observed that forests were managed communally, whereas more concentrated or intensively exploited resources such as agricultural fields were owned or managed individually (see also Pospisil 1995). More generally, Margaret McKean (2000) notes that forests are often managed in large chunks and suggests that this is also advantageous for the sustainability of the natural resource system, due to the roles of forests as watersheds and wildlife habitat and their role in protecting water, soil, and local climate.

In the two case studies that follow, I consider these factors in analysing my Bulgarian material. After a brief description of the ethnographic context, I use the empirical core of the chapter to detail the cases. I examine the agricultural land restitution from the standpoint of one village and consider the forest restitution more generally, on the basis of research in several communities in the central Rhodope Mountains. In the concluding section I offer some general observations about the material presented, compare the two cases, and discuss their implications for analyses of property in natural resources.

The Mountains of Orpheus: Ethnography and Economy

Sometimes referred to as the Mountains of Orpheus, the Rhodope Mountains are a moderate-elevation range located along Bulgaria's southern border with Greece (see map). Compared with most other mountainous regions of the country, where human settlements typically ring more compact mountain terrain, here numerous villages and small towns are scattered throughout the extensive range. Rhodope residents have historically relied on agriculture and especially livestock production for their livelihoods. Agricultural production is difficult in this marginal mountain environment, where seasonally

transhumant production of sheep and goats played a much larger role in the local and regional economy in previous centuries. The feasibility of livestock production declined in the early twentieth century, when closure of the international border to the south put an end to the practice of overwintering flocks in the Aegean lowlands. As transportation and thus trading links to the north improved, local residents turned increasingly towards the region's thick evergreen forests as a source of income. Importantly for my recent research project on forest restitution, the region has the highest concentration of private forests in Bulgaria and is one of the most forest-rich parts of the country. The forests, especially coniferous varieties such as pine and spruce, are particularly important to the local economy, because of the difficulties of agricultural production and lack of substantial industry.



Like other parts of Bulgaria, and most of eastern Europe for that matter, this region has been hard hit by the multiple changes that have occurred since the collapse of the Communist Party's political monopoly in 1989–90, including

increasing unemployment, high inflation, currency devaluation, a shrinking social safety net, and declining industrial production (see Wyzan 1998 for a summary). Of particular significance for rural Bulgarian communities, socialist-era cooperative farms have been liquidated, agricultural land has been returned to its pre-collectivisation owners or their heirs, and many small assembly workshops established in rural communities during the socialist period have been closed, eliminating numerous year-round, non-agricultural jobs. In rural areas such as this, wages are often lower and jobs scarcer than in more developed or urbanised parts of the country, although rural residents usually have easier access to land on which they can grow food (National Statistical Institute 2000; OECD 2000: 38, 48). Although Bulgaria's economy has stabilised since the economic and political crisis that gripped the country in early 1997, many Bulgarians in both rural and urban settings still worry about making ends meet, about how to buy bread and pay their utility bills.

The village that has been the focus of my analysis of the agricultural land restitution is located in a narrow river valley some distance from the main regional road and about an hour's drive by car from lowland regions to the north. Because of the valley-bottom location, which frees up more level land on the surrounding hilltops for agriculture, village houses are clustered tightly together with only the smallest of yards. At the time of my 1997 fieldwork, about 700 people lived in the village. With deaths significantly outnumbering births in recent years, however, the population had fallen to 667 people by the March 2001 census (unpublished data obtained from the local administration). Compared with some other Bulgarian villages, in which retirees predominate, this one might be described as a live village, in that there are many working-age adults and some children. In 2001, 11% of village residents were under 18 years of age, 63% were between 18 and 64, and 26% were 65 or older (unpublished data obtained from village administration). The settlement is ringed on all sides by mountain peaks and surrounded at closer range by hay meadows, potato fields, steep rocky slopes, and coniferous forests. Forests dominate the local landscape, accounting for about 70% of the territory, while agricultural land makes up only 20% (unpublished data, Chepelare Municipal Land Commission, 1997).

In the postsocialist period, most village residents have relied on diversified livelihood strategies. (Table 7.1 summarises the proportions of households participating in various activities that contributed to economic survival in 1997.) Private enterprise has expanded, but a stronger trend is increasing reliance on natural resources and agricultural production. Under these difficult economic circumstances, virtually all households grow potatoes for their own use, perhaps sharing with friends or relatives who live elsewhere, and

the majority also sell potatoes for cash, barter them for other goods, or both.[2] The vast majority also keep livestock—mostly cows—principally for milk and secondarily for meat. Milk sales provide many households with some regular cash income. Mules, horses, or donkeys are owned by more than half of village households and are important for ploughing and transportation. Many people harvest hay, which is fed to their livestock, and some households also grow a few vegetables such as beans, onions, kohlrabi, and carrots for their own consumption. Forests provide firewood for heating and cooking, and non-timber forest products such as mushrooms and medicinal plants are consumed or sold. Small as they are, wages from the few jobs and more widespread pensions provide perhaps enough cash to buy bread and pay utility bills. These individual activities are not unique to the transition period; many of them existed during the socialist era, the pre-socialist era, or both. Yet their importance and the emphasis placed on them may be different in the present.

My more recent research on the forest restitution has included fieldwork in the municipal centre with which the village is affiliated—a town of about 6,000 residents—and in a few neighbouring villages. In addition to public-sector jobs with the local government and schools, the largest economic enterprises associated with the town are a ski factory and a nearby ski resort. A dozen or so small private hotels and restaurants cater to tourists who come to this mountain region to ski in winter and hike (or simply relax and cool off) in summer. The former state sawmill has been privatised, and an economic development expert for the municipality characterised small private sawmills and other wood processing facilities as 'growing like mushrooms after the rain' in the wake of the forest restitution. With more opportunities for wage employment or private businesses such as small shops, town residents are generally less heavily involved than villagers in sales-oriented potato production and animal husbandry. They may grow potatoes for their own use, however, and they engage in forest use activities similar to those of village residents—especially collecting firewood, mushrooms, herbs, and fruits.

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[2] Informal exchange of goods through networks of friends and relatives, particularly between urban and rural areas, has been important for survival during times of shortage in Bulgaria in both the socialist and postsocialist periods. The widespread presence of barter in this village is in part a response to the disappearance of socialist-era marketing channels for agricultural produce and a shortage of cash in the postsocialist period, not just inflation or currency instability (see Cellarius 2000b).

Table 7.1: Household Livelihood Strategies, 1997

Strategy	No. House-holds	% of Sample	
Crop production			
Grow potatoes	117	97.5	
Sell potatoes	96	80.0	$
Harvest hay	107	89.2	
Own fruit and nut trees, plants or bushes	56	46.7	
Livestock production			
Own cow(s)	101	84.2	
Own draft and pack animal(s)	67	55.8	
Own sheep	30	25.0	
Own chicken(s)	26	21.7	
Own pig(s)	14	11.7	
Own goat(s)	4	3.3	
Sell milk	100	83.3	$
Sell wool and/or animal skins	25	20.8	$
Sell live animals	8	6.7	$
Off-farm resource exploitation			
Collect medicinal plants, herbs, greens, rosehips	88	73.3	$
Collect wild fruits and nuts	84	70.0	
Collect wild mushrooms	77	64.2	
Sell wild mushrooms	71	59.2	$
Collect snails (escargot)	19	15.8	
Sell snails	17	14.2	$
Heat house with firewood	120	100.0	
Other income sources			
Pension(s)	76	63.3	$
Wage employment in last year	64	53.3	$
Handicraft production for sale	15	12.5	$
Other income sources (trade, services)	5	4.2	$

Source: Author's sample survey of 120 village households, spring 1997.
Note: $ denotes a potential source of cash income.

Case One: Agricultural Land Restitution

Passage of Bulgaria's Law on the Ownership and Use of Agricultural Lands (Zakon za sobstvenostta i polzuvaneto na zemedelskite zemi, *Durzhaven vestnik,* no. 17, 1 March 1991) was one of the early acts of the postsocialist, but socialist-controlled, Grand National Assembly in February 1991.[3] This has been a controversial piece of legislation, subject to frequent amendment (discussed in Creed 1998: 222–26; Strong, Reiner, and Szyrmer 1996). As such, it has been a nexus in a battle between the Bulgarian Socialist Party and the anti-communist Union of Democratic Forces (UDF) over the future constellation of rural society, particularly over whether agriculture will be the domain of individual smallholders or producer cooperatives (Begg and Meurs 1998; Creed 1998). Although the land law contains provisions designed to discourage further fragmentation of landholdings, it goes towards one extreme among land restitution legislation in postsocialist eastern Europe in attempting to re-create landownership patterns, including fragmentation, which existed prior to collectivisation.

Under 1992 amendments to the land law by a UDF-controlled parliament, the preferred means for returning land is according to old 'real' (i.e., physically delimited) boundaries, essentially those that existed before collectivisation, in cases where such boundaries can be identified or re-established. In most parts of the country, achieving this ideal was expected to be difficult, because intervening developments had often obliterated the landmarks used to identify the boundaries between often quite small plots.[4] The exception to this was mountain areas such as the one discussed here, where former boundaries are more readily identifiable. Of the 5.68 million hectares of agricultural land in Bulgaria restituted to its former owners or their heirs by the end of 2000 (more than 99% of the land identified for restitution), 26.5% was returned according to existing or re-created real borders, and 73.5% through plans for land division (National Statistical Institute 2001: 184; cf. Konstantinov 2000).

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[3] Technically, agricultural land remained private property throughout the socialist period. Over time, however, Bulgarians essentially lost the right to control the land that had been incorporated into cooperative farms—that is, to use it, to make decisions about its use, and to benefit from the produce generated on it (Creed 1998; Meurs and Spreeuw 1997).

[4] In describing his experience in inter-war (1930s) Dragalevtsi (a foothills village near Bulgaria's capital city), for example, Sanders wrote the following about plot boundaries: 'At first I could scarcely believe my eyes when I was shown how the peasants distinguished their fields. Taking some landmark such as a tree, a bend in the road, or a stream, the peasants marked off their strips by small piles of stones. Fences and hedgerows were impracticable because the strips were too small to justify the expense of enclosure' (1949: 56).

Once agricultural land is restored, there are relatively few obvious restrictions on how it is used, beyond requirements for soil conservation, fire protection, and the maintenance of sanitary and ecological norms. In saying this, I mean that I have identified no particular restrictions in the land law, and restrictions concerning agricultural land never seemed to be a source of complaint in popular discourse. Unlike the Romanian situation described by Verdery (1994) and the Russian case described by Liesl Gambold Miller and Patrick Heady in chapter 9, in Bulgaria there are no requirements that the land be cultivated or otherwise utilised in order to maintain ownership (or use rights, as in the Russian case). And indeed, throughout the 1990s it was not uncommon to see uncultivated land while driving across the country or crossing the village territory on foot. Instead, the main legal restrictions on the use of agricultural land seemed to concern, first, isolated trees located in agricultural fields or hay meadows and, second, areas of agricultural land that had turned into forests during the socialist period through either natural processes or afforestation by state forestry authorities.[5] Cutting isolated trees on agricultural land is strictly regulated, with limits on the numbers that can be cut and rules about marking the trees. In contrast to the other uses of agricultural land, these restrictions are sources of complaint. Meanwhile, fields that have turned into young forests, whether they were reclassified into the forest fund during the socialist era or remained part of the agricultural fund, must be managed according to forestry regulations, as detailed in the next section.

How, then, does the restituted agricultural land look in the village? The restitution process began there in 1991 and was largely completed—at least on paper—in 1994.[6] Through the restitution, about 20% of the land within the village territory was returned to private ownership (unpublished data, Chepelare Municipal Land Commission, 1997). The relatively early completion date reflects the mountain setting, in which it was easier (or at

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[5] A constitutional prohibition on landownership by or sales to foreign individuals or organisations applies to both agricultural land and forests. (According to Bulgaria's Law on Foreign Investment, however, foreign interests can gain property rights over land through their participation in a company or society that is registered in Bulgaria—this Bulgarian company or firm then having the right of landownership—and the share of foreign participation is not limited.) Changing the classification from agricultural land to forest land or vice versa requires government approval.

[6] Agricultural land in this village was incorporated into a cooperative farm in the late 1950s and managed by the farm or various permutations thereof until its liquidation in the early 1990s. It was during this time that crop production in the village switched from a range of crops to monocrop potatoes, while sheep and cow production continued. Many village residents worked on the farm, but with greater labour specialisation than under conditions of private production, past or present.

least possible) to locate the old real boundaries,[7] and all agricultural land in the village was restored in this fashion (unpublished data, Chepelare Municipal Land Commission, 1997). This avoided the more complicated and time-consuming process of allocating land on another basis or otherwise providing compensation for it (Creed 1998; Strong, Reiner, and Szyrmer 1996: 54). That said, recent activity in the village concerning borders suggests that this process was by no means problem free. The mental maps of villagers sometimes do not match official government maps, and conflicts can occur when these systems come into contact—as happened with a land sale during 2001.[8]

Table 7.2: Distribution of Village Landholdings, 1997

Holding Size (ha)	No. Households	% Households	Area (ha)	% Total Area
Landless	2	1.7	0.0	0.0
Less than 0.50	9	7.7	3.1	1.5
0.50–0.99	20	17.1	15.0	7.4
1.00–1.49	25	21.4	31.0	15.3
1.50–1.99	22	18.8	35.1	17.3
2.00–2.99	21	17.9	47.7	23.6
3.00 or more	18	15.4	70.3	34.8
Total	117	100.0	202.2	100.0

Source: Author's sample survey of 120 village households, spring 1997. Sample included approximately one-half of village households. Data are missing for 3 cases.

[7] The efficiency and enthusiasm of the private firm doing the technical part of the work (i.e., mapping, measuring, and marking on the ground) is also sometimes cited as a factor.

[8] As reported by the buyer and by the person farming the land in question, a village entrepreneur had purchased some land from a man who lived in town and did not use the land. The seller had received formal title to land in the village through the land restitution process as an heir. As part of the sale process, it was necessary for a surveying firm to mark the borders of the land, as documented in the ownership papers. When the firm arrived to do so, they discovered that a third person, also a village resident, was farming the land. This elderly man explained that the land had 'always belonged to his family, except during the cooperative farm', and he could not understand where the town resident had gotten the sketch map in question—that is, the ownership document showing the location of the landholding. At last report, the buyer eventually decided to limit his purchase to land whose ownership was not in contention.

The land restitution process left most study village households, or members thereof, landowners, although the total holdings were typically small and scattered in several plots across the mountainous landscape. Self-reported data from my 1997 household survey indicated average landholdings of 1.7 hectares, with a maximum of 9.2 hectares.[9] Reflecting the pattern of land fragmentation and dispersal seen elsewhere Bulgaria, each surveyed household owned several plots scattered over an average of 5.5 different named locations. As shown in Table 7.2, the distribution of land among households was relatively equitable. Few households were landless, few owned large areas of land, and even holdings that were large by village standards were relatively modest. Nearly 85% of surveyed households owned less than 3 hectares of agricultural land.

By the time I arrived in the village in late 1996, most villagers were growing potatoes and harvesting hay on land that had been restored to them or their relatives, and a few gained access to additional land by renting it in exchange for money, produce, or labour.[10] Not surprisingly, farm size largely paralleled the results of the land restitution process. According to my survey data, the total area of land cultivated (or harvested, in the case of hay) by individual households in 1997 ranged from a few hundred square meters to 10.8 hectares and averaged 1.5 hectares.[11] Because no postsocialist agricultural cooperative has been established in this village,[12] agricultural production is organised on a household basis. Mutual labour exchange among relatives, neighbours, and friends is more common than daily wage labour as a means for accomplishing tasks that require more labour than is available within the household. Some residents describe this production system, which

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[9] Although land is owned by individuals, both men and women, the unit of agricultural production is almost always the household. Hence my decision to show landownership on a household basis.

[10] Although sharecropping is often given negative connotations, non-monetary agreements can be rational for all parties involved, in the context of uncertain food supply, rapid inflation, and cash shortage—as has been the case at various times in the postsocialist period. They mean that renters do not have to expend cash, which for some households is in short supply, while the renting-out household—for example, an elderly couple living in town and without the labour resources to work the land—can secure some quality food, again without cash expenditure.

[11] Three households owned relatively large flocks of sheep, and each harvested hay from more than five hectares of meadows, some of them rented, in order to provide food for the animals.

[12] Such cooperatives have been established elsewhere in Bulgaria, particularly in lowland grain-producing areas better suited to large-scale agricultural production (Meurs and Spreeuw 1997: 282), but they are less common in this mountain region. I am aware of only one agricultural cooperative in the municipality in which this village is located, and there is at least one in a village in the neighbouring municipality.

uses relatively simple hand tools (e.g., hoes, scythes) and animal draft, as a step back in time from the more mechanised production of the socialist era.

Pastures are not privately owned as such, although livestock production requires that one own, borrow, or rent enough land from which to harvest hay, as well as access to land on which to pasture the animals. Land used for pasture is typically either land within the forest fund or meadows, scrubland, and young forests that are managed by the municipality.[13] The forest fund was in state hands during my 1997 fieldwork but has since been largely returned to private ownership in this village. Fees may be charged when livestock are pastured on forest fund land, and during the off season (between harvest and early spring) animals can also be pastured on privately owned agricultural land. Thanks to a neighbourhood-based herding system, owners of cows either occasionally serve as herders or pay someone to go in their place, rather than having herding duties every day. Finally, according to my estimates, perhaps 21% to 24% of the restored agricultural land is not being used.[14] Typically, this land is farther away from the village (cf. Konstantinov 2000), and this estimate does not include a substantial chunk of unclaimed land that is currently under municipal management.

Different households use their land in different ways, often depending upon numerous variables including the labour and financial resources available within the household. A few examples illustrate the variation. At one end of the spectrum are households that have made a serious investment in potato production, such that they rent or, in a few cases, have even purchased additional land, acquired a small tractor (a recent development postdating my initial fieldwork), and occasionally hired workers for day wages. (Very few households have intensified in the direction of livestock, specifically sheep, production; even the village veterinarian focuses on potatoes.) Then there are households in which the working-age adults have non-agricultural jobs, so that their time for farming is limited. Yet they produce what potatoes they can to supplement their inadequate salaries, helping to pay the education expenses of their children, for example, as well as providing some of their annual food supply. Of course, there is considerable gradation between the largest village farmers and these peasant-workers. Finally, at the other end of the spectrum are pensioners whose children live elsewhere. They might have a lot of land, but without children living in the village or at least nearby, they are unable to farm it all. Sometimes they say that their children do not even know or care where the land is. Such house-

[13] Their permanent ownership status unclear, these are lands that went unclaimed in the agricultural land restitution and are under municipal management for the time being.

[14] Some of this land has turned into forests and thus cannot be use for agriculture; however, my data do not allow me to estimate the precise area.

holds use a little of their land to produce for their own consumption needs and rent out or simply leave unused the rest.

Table 7.3: Significant Problems in Household Production, as Perceived by Villagers in 1997

	No. Households	% Households
Problems in crop production	53	44.9
High cost of artificial fertilisers, pesticides, herbicides	21	17.8
High cost of transportation and/or gasoline	12	10.2
Colorado potato beetles	9	7.6
Health or age of household members	7	5.9
Lack of cash with which to purchase inputs	5	4.2
Unavailability of inputs in village	5	4.2
High cost of plowing and/or tractor services	5	4.2
Problems with labour organisation	5	4.2
Low price received for production	2	1.7
Potato blight	2	1.7
Frost	1	0.8
No problems identified	50	42.4
Problems in livestock production		
High cost of concentrated forage	65	60.7
Unavailability of concentrated forage in the village	38	35.5
Low price paid for milk	20	18.7
High cost of insemination services	7	6.5
Problems with hay production	5	4.7
Problems with hay transportation	4	3.7
Health or age of household members	3	2.8
Lack of mill for forage in village	1	0.9
No problems identified	41	38.3

Source: Author's sample survey of 120 village households, spring 1997. Percentages are based on 118 households reporting involvement in crop production and 107 households reporting involvement in livestock production.

Two aspects of the current situation are particularly relevant to the role of restituted agricultural land in the postsocialist rural economy of this village. First, although sales of agricultural land among Bulgarians are legal and indeed encouraged by the government, there is virtually no market for agricultural land here. Sales are rare—perhaps a total of three or four in the village by the time I asked about this in the summer of 2001. This absence of a real-estate market means that one cannot benefit economically from restitution by selling one's restored agricultural land. Second, when I asked residents in 1997 about the main constraints they perceived on their agricultural and livestock production, access to land was never identified as a problem (Table 7.3). Instead, the most commonly mentioned problems concerned the costs and availability of commercial inputs such as chemical fertilisers and concentrated animal forage. Other problems included labour organisation, especially for older couples or widows without children living in the village, low prices for their produce, and marketing difficulties. The 1999 potato crop was a good one, for example, but prices for the potatoes were low, due to an ample domestic supply that year, decreased consumption and therefore demand because of the ongoing economic crisis in Bulgaria, and reportedly cheap imports from Turkey. Consequently, many villagers were cooking potatoes to feed them to their livestock during the spring of 2000, rather than selling them 'for pennies'.

What can be said in summary about the consequences of the agricultural land restitution for resource use and the rural economy in this region? The land law and associated implementing regulations have had a relatively limited direct effect on resource management and use, except for questions involving trees or young forests located on agricultural land, and the bottom line in terms of the rural economy is that access to agricultural land is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for successful agricultural production. No one identified access to land (i.e., not having enough of it) as a problem for household production. For those interested in expanding production, it was possible to rent or borrow land, and money was not necessary for doing so. Rather, the main problems in household production identified by village residents were the cost and availability of commercial inputs. For some people, especially the elderly, mobilising enough labour for agricultural activities could be difficult. In short, one might have plenty of land, but it might be of little benefit if one lacked the labour, supplies, equipment, or cash (to purchase these things) necessary for making use of it.

As an economic resource, agricultural land has use value but not exchange value under these circumstances. The absence of a market for agri-

cultural land is a widespread problem in much of Bulgaria,[15] but it may be particularly acute in mountainous regions such as this, where large-scale production possibilities are constrained by the landscape and where elevation limits the kinds of crops that can be produced in an economically competitive fashion. Small-scale agricultural production is an important, if not critical, survival strategy in the short term, but the longer-term prospects for commercial agriculture in the region are less clear (see also Dobreva 1994). Can smallholder production in the Rhodope Mountains compete with larger-scale production in Greece or Turkey? One hears, for example, occasional complaints that the market price is low because 'poor-quality potatoes' from these neighbouring countries are flooding the market. Some agricultural extension agents and environmental nongovernmental organisations have suggested switching to other, higher-value crops such as berries or medicinal plants or to organic production, but village farmers are concerned about the market for these (in some cases more perishable) products and also about start-up costs (e.g., for berry plants). Obtaining a bank loan requires collateral such as buildings, but village houses typically do not qualify as such, and agricultural land is similarly not considered, because of its lack of exchange value. Finally, many agricultural assistance programmes, such as the European Union's new Special Accession Program for Agriculture and Rural Development (SAPARD), are geared towards a production scale in terms of cropping area or animal numbers that few villagers in this region are likely to achieve soon.

Case Two: Forest Ownership, Use, and Management

The National Assembly authorised Bulgaria's forest restitution in late 1997, essentially undoing the nationalisation of the late 1940s.[16] The Law for the

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[15] One needs to look only as far as the World Bank's Bulgarian website (http://www.worldbank.bg/press/2002-01-eccbg.phtml) to find a press release dated 13 February 2002 and titled 'Two Million Dollars Dutch Grant Supports Bulgarian Land Market Development' (see also Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry 2001). According to a 2000 OECD report on Bulgarian agriculture, factors contributing to the lack of an active agricultural land market, despite Bulgaria's having a legal framework for land sales, include the low profitability of the agrarian sector, high transaction costs, and difficulties with collateral and credit.

[16] Forests are an important natural resource in Bulgaria, particularly in mountain regions. About one-third of Bulgaria's territory is covered with forests—a figure that has remained relatively stable over several decades because aggressive reforestation has balanced exploitation during state socialist times (Bojinov et al. 1994). After nationalisation in 1947–48, the forests were exploited in big chunks by the state. Yet some people benefited from employment in the state forest enterprises during the socialist era, local residents could collect non-timber forest products, and firewood and construction materials could be had for a fee.

Restitution of Ownership over Forests and Lands of the Forest Fund (Zakon za vuzstanovyavane na sobstvenostta vurhu gorite i zemite ot gorskiya fond, *Durzhaven vestnik,* no. 110, 25 November 1997; hereafter forest restitution law) returned forests to pre-nationalisation owners, their heirs, or their successors, whether they were private individuals, municipalities, or legal persons such as churches or schools. Private forests, the focus of my analysis here, accounted for about 16% of Bulgarian forests before nationalisation (Table 7.4) but an estimated 70% of forests in the municipality on which my research has focused (with even higher percentages in some communities). The post-restitution figures for private forests are expected to be comparable. This law is in some ways similar to the agricultural land restitution law in terms of the priority it gives to old real borders and the re-creation of the pre-nationalisation ownership structure.

Table 7.4: Structure of Bulgarian Forest Ownership, 1941–1942

Type of Owner	No. Owners	Total Forest Fund (ha)	% Forest Fund
State	1	961,739.3	26.6
Municipalities[a]	6,059	1,980,254.3	54.7
Private	472,656	590,926.4	16.3
Holding of more than 50 ha	153	63,426.9	1.8
Holding of less than 50 ha	472,503	527,499.5	14.6
Other[b]	1,107	88,441.6	2.4
Total	479,823	3,621,361.6	100.0

Source: Adapted from Stoyanov 1968: 230.

[a] Municipal forests include those allotted to municipalities for long-term use, as well as forests actually owned by them. Under the forest restitution law, only forests for which claimants have clear documentation of outright ownership can be restored. Consequently, many forests shown here as municipal forests remain in state hands.

[b] Includes schools, religious institutions and cooperatives.

The deadlines for filing forest restitution claims were in 1999, and forest ownership documents should have been distributed by 30 June 2000—although in most places this deadline was not met. In the municipality where my field study took place, most of the documents had been distributed by the spring of 2001. As of 28 June 2002, 560,117 hectares of forest had been

restored nationwide, through decisions on 291,466 claims. Of this land, 322,251 hectares were returned to individuals, 210,887 hectares to municipalities, and the remainder to legal persons such religious organisations, schools, and cooperatives. In the Smolyan district, which includes my field site, 31,771 hectares of forest were returned to private individuals, ranking the district second in the country in area of private forests restored (National Statistical Institute 2002). The average area restored to individuals nationwide was slightly more than 1 hectare, although claim sizes varied by region and some private holdings were significantly larger than this average. In my field sites, for example, claims of 5 to 10 hectares were not unusual, and a few exceeded 100 hectares. Beyond this, many holdings actually consist of several smaller pieces scattered in different locations, so the average 1–hectare holding might not be all in the same place. Finally, after the restored forests are distributed among one or two generations of heirs, the holdings of a given individual will in most cases be smaller.

With the restitution comes the possibility that owners will again, as was the case before nationalisation, be able to generate income by selling timber from their private forests or otherwise exploiting them. Holding legal title to forests does not mean that owners are free to do whatever they want with them, however. Some of the bundle of rights and obligations associated with the forests as property is controlled by the state. Once the owners receive their documents and the borders of the forests are marked on the ground to the extent possible, the forests must be managed according to Bulgaria's new Law on Forests (Zakon za gorite, *Durzhaven vestnik,* no. 125, 29 December 1997), along with associated rules and regulations. The purpose of the law (article 1, paragraph 2) is 'the preservation of Bulgaria's forests as a national resource ... through their regeneration and sustainable development and multipurpose use in the interest of the owners and society'.

The section of the forest law on resource use focuses on forests as sources of harvestable timber, though it also regulates the collection of non-timber forest products such as mushrooms, which are also the property of the forest owner, and other so-called auxiliary uses such as livestock pasturing. Under its provisions, all forests must be managed according to a plan for their 'optimal use', the plan must be approved by the government forestry administration, and a licensed forester must be involved in implementing it.[17]

[17] Following restitution, owners will receive copies of the forest management plans in effect for their forests, plans that were prepared for the state forest administration largely prior to restitution. They are based, in turn, on regulations developed by a panel of 'forestry experts' combined with data about the forests (age, species composition, elevation, etc.). These plans will have from one to ten years remaining before their expiration, and the new owners must pay for the preparation of subsequent plans.

The plan will specify how much timber can be harvested in a given period (currently ten years), so an owner cannot necessarily cut all of his or her trees immediately in order to turn a quick profit—at least not legally. Cutting must take place according to the plan, government-licensed foresters must mark the trees before they are cut, clear-cutting of parcels larger than five hectares is prohibited, and reforestation may be required after logging.[18] In short, forest use, unlike that of agricultural land, is largely circumscribed by law.[19]

In talking about post-restitution forest management, it is also important to recognise that forests are being restored in two different forms (see Cellarius 2000a for additional details). As in the agricultural land restitution, returning forests according to their 'old real borders' is the preferred method—in other words, as parcels with physically delimited borders that can be mapped and marked on the ground, preferably in the same location as the pre-nationalisation holdings. This is the kind of property with which we in the modern West are most familiar, it is the ideal according to the restitution law, and it is also the way in which agricultural land was returned in the Rhodope Mountains. This procedure was not always possible, however. Some private forests were managed in big chunks by forestry cooperatives at the time of nationalisation,[20] and real borders cannot be identified for the

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[18] Such rules regarding plans, marking, reforestation, and so on are not new and thus cannot be attributed solely to the postsocialist period. Several people told me that logging was similarly regulated during the pre-socialist era, with requirements for getting permission from government authorities and even the marking of trees by forestry officials prior to cutting. One person further explained that the standing trees were numbered, and that after cutting, the volume of timber was measured and written on a list so that trees 'could not disappear'. 'There was full control', he said.

[19] The extent to which the laws are followed and enforced is itself a question, given the sometimes limited enforcement capacity of the postsocialist government. When a rash of forest fires provided the top news story in the summer of 2000, for example, one sometimes heard complaints that the people setting the fires had little to lose. Fines for starting fires were said to be ridiculously low, and after a fire one could reportedly buy the timber at fire-sale prices. Nevertheless, such fires—which some interpreted as resistance to the restitution—were relatively infrequent in this municipality.

[20] I have translated the phrase *gorovladelska proizvoditelna kooperatsiya* as 'forestry cooperative'. The first term signals forest (*gora*) ownership or possession (*vladenie*); the second term refers to production or output. In the pre-socialist era, there were also *trudovi gorski proizvoditelni kooperatsii,* which were cooperatives of forest workers (e.g., loggers) rather than forest owners, the term *trud* referring to work or labour (Karaivanov 1990; Kuzmanov 1967).

individually owned holdings within these forest massifs.[21] Consequently, the forest restitution law was amended to account for a second form: shared or joint ownership—*susobstvenost* in Bulgarian—of a particular forest massif, or *revir*.[22]

Because many central Rhodope forests were in cooperatives at the time of nationalisation (which was not typically the case elsewhere in the country), many of them have been restored in this second fashion. Owners hold different proportions of a named forest massif, ranging in size from 30 or 50 to a few hundred hectares, and the particular proportion of ownership by each co-owner in a given revir depends on the size of his or her pre-nationalisation forest holding in that revir. Ownership is being restored not in the pre-socialist cooperatives but rather in particular named chunks of forest that are bordered by geographical features such as streams, valley bottoms, and ridges. In other words, from a legal standpoint people are not receiving shares in an economic organisation or institution such as a cooperative, but rather shares of a piece of real estate.

This ownership form has implications for resource management. Following the restitution, the co-owners of such forest massifs must jointly decide what to do with their shared property.[23] In principle, they could decide to divide up a revir among themselves, into individual parcels with real borders, but this would require arranging and paying for valuation of the massif and then agreeing upon a method for dividing it into pieces—which would then need to be managed individually. This was seen to be unlikely, and to my knowledge it has not been done. Thus, it was something of a given that these forests would end up under joint management. The form the co-management would take and who would be selected for the leadership were still open questions, however. One issue of concern has been voting structure, especially whether capital would lead—that is, whether the number of votes would be based on holding size—or, alternatively, whether each coop-

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[21] In some cases, there may never have been real borders to the individual holdings, a result of the specific history of forest ownership at this location. In other cases, there may once have been borders, albeit documented in social terms (e.g., who the neighbours were) rather than in physical space (e.g., with reference to physical landscape features), but the locations have been forgotten since the formation of the pre-socialist cooperatives in the 1920s and 1930s. A few people told me that they knew the borders of their parents' or grandparents' forests, but these were a small minority.

[22] My MPISA colleague Patrick Heady reports that a similar joint ownership system for forests existed in the northeastern Italian Alps (see also Netting 1981; Pospisil 1995).

[23] The formal legal creation and registration of organisations for forest management, be they cooperatives, societies, limited liability corporations, or joint stock companies, were possible only after these documents had been received, although community leaders and some large forest owners had been discussing the possibilities for a few years (see Cellarius 2000a).

erative member would have one vote, as required by Bulgaria's current law on cooperatives. Also of significance in the postsocialist context is how people with relevant experience accumulated in socialist-era institutions are viewed as possible leaders for these management organisations. Are they seen as useful resources or as people tainted by their association with socialist organisations that some view as having been corrupt? Or rather as poor economic managers?

At this early juncture, a little more than a year after most central Rhodope forest owners received their ownership documents, it is possible to make a preliminary report on the situation. In the summer and fall of 2001, forest owners were busy creating forestry cooperatives and other management organisations. By the summer of 2002, some sort of joint management structure had been established for most, if not all, revirs in the region. Cooperatives, in which each member had one vote regardless of holding size, dominated, but there were also a few management societies, established under a different law, which were quicker to register and in which capital led. Although a few had not yet started operations, two had already had their first regular general assemblies, and most were busy cleaning up trees downed in winter storms and logging.

Although forestry cooperatives appear to enjoy considerable popular support in the municipality where my fieldwork has focused, conversations with some local residents suggest that the socialist experience with cooperatives might still be grounds for a lack of trust in co-op leaders. It may make people more cautious about leadership and about issues of transparency in the organisation and management of the postsocialist cooperatives. Some people expressed doubt that the new forestry cooperatives would be immune to the pocket lining and nepotism of the socialist-era ones. On my most recent research trip, for example, I heard occasional criticism of the high salaries earned by forestry cooperative presidents and concern that when salaries and expenses were paid, there would be nothing left for the owners. 'Just like on the [socialist-era] TKZCs', a few people said.[24]

The nature of a forest owner's involvement depends on a variety of factors, including holding size, place of residence, and whether he or she has relevant forestry or management skills. A few individuals—often larger owners, community leaders, professional foresters, or a combination thereof—have taken a lead in establishing cooperatives and forest management societies. As was the case with the pre-socialist cooperatives, larger

[24] Although socialist-era agricultural enterprises changed their forms and names, rural residents most often refer to them by the acronym TKZC, which stands for *trudovo kooperativno zemedelsko stopanstvo* (literally, labour cooperative agricultural enterprise). I refer to them as cooperative farms.

owners are often elected to the managing boards of the new organisations, in part on the assumption that they will have the greatest interest in the organisations' overall success. The relatively few families with their own revirs have also largely taken the bull by the horns and begun logging. Many others—typically smaller, often elderly owners—have been more passive. Such people simply say that they have joined the cooperative and are waiting to see what happens.[25] They hope the co-ops will succeed but are unsure whether they will. Location makes some difference in the degree of involvement as well. A few relatively large forest owners with whom I am acquainted would like to be more involved in what is happening to their property, but these working-age people have busy careers in the capital city, nearly four hours' drive from their forests, and consequently feel unable to be directly involved in the leadership of the cooperative.[26] Instead, they rely on family, friends, and occasionally a visiting anthropologist for news of cooperative activities.

What, then, can be said about the implications of the forest restitution for resource management and the rural economy in the central Rhodope Mountains? First, resource management is largely constrained or structured by Bulgaria's new forest law, with its focus on commercial timber production and exploitation plans, regardless of ownership status. An additional consequence of the law is that forests cannot go unmanaged—that is, nature cannot simply be allowed to take its course. For example, there are few fallen trees in Bulgarian forests, trees that might otherwise have become the homes of small animals, insects, and so on. Instead, such 'fallen material' is inventoried and then gathered up in the spring to be sold as firewood or timber, depending on its condition.

Meanwhile, I have heard several complaints from cooperative officials about the bureaucracy associated with private forest management. They have not necessarily taken this sitting down. In the spring of 2002, several cooperative leaders formed an association to protect the interests of private forest owners. One of its first activities—indeed, even before its formal registration had been completed—was to make recommendations to the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry on a conception for the management of non-state forests that the ministry had developed. One of the goals of the group's recommendations was to reduce the level of bureaucracy associated with

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[25] Whether it is a cooperative they have joined or some other legal form seems of little significance to them. They refer to co-ops.

[26] This is one of several ways in which the pre- and postsocialist forestry cooperatives differ. Before, the number of members was more limited, and most if not all of them lived in the local area. Now, members are scattered all over the country, if not the globe, and with the passage of generations the numbers of members are significantly higher.

cooperative forest exploitation. Some more interested forest owners and cooperative officials also complain that the laws were written by people sitting at a desk in Sofia; they suggest that these policymakers should find out what is happening on the ground.

Second, most central Rhodope forests will end up being managed in large chunks, either as family owned revirs or as jointly owned ones managed by forestry cooperatives or other management organisations. This is at least in part because many forests in the Rhodope Mountains have been returned as shared or joint property, which structurally encourages collective or joint management. Even for forests not returned in such a form, economic realities may encourage joint management.[27] In other words, rational choice might suggest joint management when it means that operations are conducted on a larger scale, with associated economies of scale and gains in efficiency. Indeed, this was one of the reasons for the passage of pre-socialist laws requiring joint management of Rhodope forests, which in turn promoted the creation of cooperatives at that time. A handful of forestry cooperatives even pre-dated such laws (Kuzmanov 1967).

Of course, this has something to do with the nature of forests as resources more generally. Forestry cooperatives are clearly not uniquely a socialist-era phenomenon in Bulgaria, having been prominent in the Rhodope Mountains in the years before nationalisation (Karaivanov 1990; Stefanov 1983), and many others have observed joint forest management elsewhere in the world (e.g., Netting 1981; Gibson, McKean, and Ostrom 2000). To the resource characteristics mentioned earlier as influencing the relative efficiency of different types of property regimes, I would add the time horizon of resource management. Specifically, the time horizon for forestry is considerably different from that for agriculture. A farmer can harvest a crop or even two each year from a given parcel of land, whereas trees might typically be harvested after 50 years or more. Meanwhile, ongoing investment is required for protection and care of these forests. Cooperative or other joint management of a larger geographic area can even out the flow of both revenues and expenses over time.

In terms of the rural economy, with the restitution comes the possibility for owners to earn some income from forest exploitation. (As with agricultural land, there is not yet a real market for forests, although some owners

[27] Some people who own smaller parcels of forest with real borders (a minority of the forests in the region) are interested in putting them into the co-ops, whereas others are sitting tight to see whether the co-ops will succeed before doing so.

would like to sell.)[28] Given the difficult economic situation in Bulgaria, in which many people struggle to make ends meet, such exploitation is of considerable interest to many forest owners. But it assumes that they can figure out how to do so.[29] As with agricultural land, possession does not necessarily guarantee successful exploitation. For this, one must have access to the knowledge, skills, and technology to harvest the resource and then a market for one's produce. In this regard, forestry may differ significantly from agriculture. Whereas many rural residents were involved in agriculture at some level in the socialist era, through production on personal plots or occasional peak season work on the cooperative farm, fewer people had reason to be directly involved in the forest products industry.[30] Scale matters as well: small owners are unlikely to get rich in any case.

Yet while agriculture faces associated challenges, this mountain landscape is well suited to forestry. Firms and cooperatives are emerging that will manage forests for owners who do not want to do so on their own. It is possible that it will become easier to find someone to manage forest resources—although this will not guarantee a return. Returns may also depend on management costs, market conditions, and the form in which the timber is sold (i.e., as raw timber, boards, or finished products).

Once exploitation is organised, private forestry should also provide some local jobs in these employment-scarce rural communities. But private logging and sawmill jobs will most likely replace equivalent positions that were previously in the state sector. Indeed, job numbers for a given volume of timber may decrease when market forces rather than socialist employment policies govern the numbers of people hired. Thus, postsocialist forestry employment is unlikely to exceed that of the socialist era, unless the cooperatives or other entrepreneurs succeed in organising value-added processing such as furniture or toy production. Such enterprises are poorly developed in the region at present, however, and may require start-up capital, ever elusive

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[28] Sale of forests that were restored as joint property in revirs is complicated by provisions in Bulgaria's Law on Property (Zakon za sobstvenostta, *Durzhaven vestnik*, no. 92, 16 November 1951, as amended) requiring that owners wishing to sell co-property must first offer it to all the other co-owners before offering it on the open market.

[29] In the short term, enthusiasm to cut as much timber as possible as soon as possible in order to get out of the economic bind might lead to an oversupply of timber and falling prices. At least, a simple supply-and-demand model of neo-classical economics might predict this, and forest owners and other forest-sector observers sometimes express concern about such a situation's developing.

[30] During my conversations in the spring of 2002, leaders of some forestry cooperatives and other management organisations remarked upon an insufficient local supply of skilled forestry workers or otherwise mentioned having hired workers from outside the local area.

because of the difficulty of getting bank loans.[31] Yet despite potential financial hurdles, processing is on the wish lists of many cooperatives, and a few have taken initial steps in this direction—for example, purchasing small sawmills or authorising the purchase of land on which to locate a mill in the future.

Conclusion

Bulgaria's postsocialist restitutions of both agricultural land and forests have emphasised the 'moral' and legal principle of returning to former owners or their heirs what had been taken away, and returning it in its original form. The restitutions have promoted an ideology of individuated private ownership over state or communal property regimes. In both cases, the owners of restituted property in the Rhodope Mountains have been on the receiving end of national-level policies sent from Sofia, although a few Rhodope residents were reportedly involved in writing the forest restitution law. Additionally, the law, initially written with a focus on real borders, was subsequently amended to take into account the category of joint property in forest revirs—a form of ownership specific to this region of the country. In other words, the law was changed because of the structure of forest ownership in the Rhodope Mountains and at the request of some forest owners from there.

The cases presented here allow us to ask whether the return to private property as an ideal type has been all it was cracked up to be. Certainly, some Bulgarians would say that it has not. One of my village neighbours, a woman from a family that had done relatively well in the postsocialist period, commented to me several times that she would happily give back the agricultural land restored to her family if it meant re-establishment of the cooperative farm and with it the possibility of full employment for local residents. In part the question comes down to whether people can make effective use of the resources—the property—to which they have access. Do they have the other resources necessary for accessing the property's potential value? These are important questions for both agricultural land and forests in Bulgaria.[32]

In the case of agricultural land, it is clear that access to property is a necessary but not sufficient condition for successfully making use of the land. Much the same can be said about forests. Making money from them is easier when one owns them, but cutting them down and getting the timber to

[31] A few forestry cooperatives began their activities with private loans from acquaintances of co-op officials, at least sometimes at higher-than-market interest rates.

[32] As a result of socialist-era migration processes, the new Bulgarian property owners do not necessarily live in the area where their property is located. Living in a place makes it easier to use the resources there, particularly in the absence of a land market.

market—especially in compliance with the new law on forests—is easier said than done. In the course of my research on Bulgaria's forest restitution, I have occasionally heard forest owners ask government officials what they are supposed to do with the forests or otherwise comment that it would be better for the state to continue to manage the forests and simply give them some of the proceeds. The lack of real-estate markets also plays a role in whether a resource has value or whether one has the necessary capital to access its value. Sluggish real-estate markets mean that property sales are not currently a viable way to benefit economically from either of the restitutions.

There are, of course, important differences between the two kinds of restored property discussed here. Agricultural land is more easily exploited by individual households, and many had some prior experience in doing so. It is an important subsistence resource under the difficult economic conditions of the present, but with current production methods, few smallholder farmers are likely to get rich. Forests in this landscape, on the other hand, are possibly more valuable in the long run, and given the nature of forests as a resource, alternative exploitation structures or management possibilities are emerging. Individual management of forests, at least of average-size holdings, is difficult, however. (As a subsistence resource, forests might heat the house but are less useful for putting food on the table.) Because of the economic value of forests in this region, and also because there is greater variation in holding sizes, I suspect that, to the extent to which the restored property contributes to increasing wealth inequality in the central Rhodope Mountains, forests will be more influential than agricultural land. For similar reasons—that is, forests' more obvious cash value—a market for forest land may develop sooner than a market for agricultural land in this setting. So far, however, few people, if any, are looking to buy, at least at real prices, whereas there are owners who want to sell. With regard to the bundle of rights and obligations discussed by property theorists, forest use is more structured by legal provisions, with their focus on commercial timber production regardless of ownership regime, than is agricultural use. Clearly, one must also look outside the local context to the larger legal and economic arena for additional influences on the shape of resource use.

Finally, the cases discussed here suggest some more general issues concerning property and resource use. These are particularly worth considering in light of the focus in many former socialist countries on devolving property ownership or use rights from the state or cooperatives to private individuals, often on the basis of assumptions about the efficiency of private property. Despite the focus of Bulgaria's restitutions on historical justice, the ways in which they have been carried out, and sometimes their results, do

not always make sense to people on the receiving end. Many factors can influence the use and usefulness of property or other resources, only one of which is the form of ownership. The physical characteristics of the resource play a role, as does access to other things needed to make use of the property, whether these are inputs and technology, labour, financial resources, or, more likely, a combination thereof. Additional factors include the influence of the larger context in terms of the overall economic health of the region or the country (which affects the importance of subsistence for household livelihoods), legal rules and regulations regarding resource use, and markets and marketing possibilities for produce. Other items could probably be added to the list, but the point should be clear: Resource use is affected in complex ways by many factors, and private property, when this means individuated private property management, is not necessarily the solution, nor is it always the most logical, rational choice.

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Chapter 8

Retreat to the Cooperative or to the Household? Agricultural Privatisation in Ukraine and Azerbaijan

Deema Kaneff and Lale Yalçın-Heckmann

Although Azerbaijan became a part of the Soviet Union a quarter of a century earlier than the part of Ukraine discussed in this chapter, at the time of the collapse of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s, both countries had been shaped by similar Soviet agricultural policies for more than 40 years. They shared a system of collectivised agriculture that existed in various versions throughout the socialist world. It consisted of *sovkhozy* (state farms) and *kolkhozy* (collective farms) alongside household plots that provided subsistence and sometimes market possibilities for families. Both countries followed Soviet policy, passed down from Moscow, whether it consisted of directives to merge collectives or to uproot vineyards in an attempt to address problems of excessive alcohol consumption. However, following the collapse of the Soviet Union and the attainment of independence, these countries adopted quite different policies on a wide range of issues. Although they shared the goal of establishing private farming as the basis of postsocialist agricultural production, the ways in which they carried out land reforms varied considerably.

In this chapter we compare postsocialist land reform in rural Ukraine and Azerbaijan.[1] In Ukraine, landownership was based on one's affiliation with a socialist workplace. How much land a person was entitled to depended on the type of work she or he had carried out in the period leading up to the reforms. In Azerbaijan, landownership was founded on residential family ties. Entitlements were contingent primarily on where a person was registered as residing and secondarily on family status. In highlighting work and residence as the key operative features of land privatisation, we do not wish to imply that land reform in either country can be reduced to one or the

[1] The fieldwork carried out by Kaneff in Ukraine is still in progress. Her part in this chapter is based on approximately four months of fieldwork in the village of Nagorna. Yalçın-Heckmann's fieldwork consists of nearly ten months in two sites during several trips in 2000–2002.

other characteristic. Nevertheless, these keys are helpful in drawing general contrasts and similarities between the two countries.

Following independence, both countries made moves to liberalise their economies and legislated wide-ranging privatisation measures. In Azerbaijan, the decade 1985–95 witnessed not only the end of the Soviet system, with a major decline in all economic and political institutions, but also ethnic and political upheavals, deportations to and from Azerbaijan, and a war with Armenia in 1992–94. In the mid-1990s Azerbaijan counted nearly a million internally displaced persons and refugees, who needed to be settled and fed. The country had lost nearly one-fifth of its territory, which is still under Armenian occupation. These detrimental effects of the war and political crises are hoped to be overcome with income from oil and gas production. Azerbaijan exported 8.92 million tonnes of crude oil (180,000 barrels a day)

in 2002,[2] whereas agriculture was only 18.1% of GDP in 2000.[3] Azerbaijan's agricultural policies in the post-Soviet years have been strongly shaped by factors external to the agricultural processes of the postsocialist transition.

We begin our comparative study by providing brief background notes on the two main field sites. We then describe the ways in which land reform took place in each field site. Finally, we suggest that these modes of land reform have been fundamentally important in establishing new agricultural infrastructures—systems of production and marketing—in rural contexts. These infrastructures, in turn, give shape to day-to-day agricultural activities and have had consequences in terms of emerging inequalities and tensions. Reforms in the Azerbaijani case were apparently the more radical of the two, more fully eliminating traces of the Soviet agricultural infrastructure and replacing it with an informal network of production and marketing based on kinship and friendship. In Ukraine, reforms represent a less dramatic break with the past. Yet in both instances, cooperation among people engaged in agricultural production remains paramount, and in this sense continuity with the Soviet past is evident in both countries.

Background

Table 8.1 provides a summary of the two field sites. Although the Ukrainian village, Nagorna, has only half the population of the Azerbaijani settlement, Tezekend, its area is almost double that of Tezekend's. Consequently, even the smallest landowners in the Ukraine case ('social sphere' workers) own at least 3 times more land than anyone in the Azerbaijan case, and former collective workers in Ukraine own almost 30 times more. This landownership pattern is significant in the continued importance of cooperatives in the Ukraine case, where comparatively small households own large tracts of land that they cannot easily farm themselves. In the Azerbaijan case, almost all kolkhoz and sovkhoz land has been privatised and distributed to residents of the village. With the liquidation of the Soviet-era institutions, the community has been left with few of the infrastructural benefits they once provided, including employment opportunities.

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[2] 'Azerbaijan boosts 2002 crude oil products exports', reported by Reuters News agency on 8 January 2003, http://www.reuters.com.

[3] *Statistical Yearbook of Azerbaijan* 2001: 30.

Table 8.1: Comparison of Village Field Sites

Field Site	Population	No. Households	Area (hectares)	Private Landownership
Nagorna, Ukraine	3,066	1,026 (mean household size = 2.99 persons)	7,237	Ex-kolkhoz members: 3.45 hectares Ex-sovkhoz members: 4.1 hectares Social sphere workers: 0.5 hectares
Tezekend, Azerbaijan	7,239	1,764 (mean household size = 4.1 persons)	3,913	0.14 hectares per person

Occupational categories in the Ukraine and Azerbaijan cases therefore show considerable variation. In the Ukrainian village, three-quarters of the working people were registered as agricultural workers. In Azerbaijan, because all village residents have received land shares, they are officially considered to have become private household farmers, or *fermery*.[4] In fact, only 17% of a sample of 74 households gave agriculture as their main occupation, mostly without other income sources.[5] Migration from the two field sites shows some variation as well. In the Ukraine case, fewer than 10% of the villagers were working outside the village, whereas 24% of the surveyed households in the Azerbaijan study had at least one household member working abroad.

The Ukrainian Case

First settled in the late 1700s by Bulgarian settlers escaping Ottoman rule in Bulgaria, the land in the south-eastern corner of present-day Ukraine was

[4] According to *Agriculture of Azerbaijan: Statistical Yearbook* (2000: 11), 96% of the national agricultural produce was being produced by *fermery* (*fermerler*, in Azerbaijani).

[5] This is not to say that agriculture is carried out only by this group. Resident pensioners, state employees, self-employed people, housewives, traders, migrant workers, and the unemployed have also received land shares and may be engaging in agriculture, too.

described in letters written at the time as 'unused' and as a 'wilderness'.[6] The Russian tsar granted the immigrants 6,619 hectares, and they established the village Karagacha (renamed Nagorna after the Second World War) on condition that they become a Russian colony and adopt the Russian Orthodox religion. Karagacha was one of a number of Bulgarian settlements established in the region around this time. During the first half of the twentieth century, the area was alternately part of Romania and of Russia before being incorporated into the Soviet Union after the Second World War. Since its founding by 118 Bulgarian families, Nagorna has grown steadily, reaching a population peak of 3,221 in 1982. This figure has remained relatively stable in the last two decades.

Throughout Nagorna's history, though technologies have changed, its residents have made use of fish from the large lake on which the village is located and have grown cereals, grains, vegetables, fruits, and wine grapes (Marov and Bratkov 1967). Perhaps the greatest reforms in production occurred after the Second World War, when privately owned and farmed land was collectivised. Unlike residents of other parts of Ukraine and the former Soviet Union—including those in our Azerbaijani case—the inhabitants of Nagorna have memories of where their land once was, although Kaneff has heard no expressions of emotional attachment to such plots. The kolkhoz in Nagorna was established in 1947 from the private land and animals of villagers. The remaining land, which was never in private ownership but was used as common pasture, was the land from which a sovkhoz was formed in 1948. The government invested considerable capital and resources in establishing and maintaining the sovkhoz, and it always received greater funding and other benefits from the socialist government.

The formation of the kolkhoz and sovkhoz was a crucial event in Nagorna. Spatially, the village was divided in two: if someone lived on the side of the village closer to kolkhoz land, then he or she was more likely to work for the kolkhoz. Exceptions were common, however. There was also considerable movement back and forth. Baba Mina, Kaneff's elderly landlady, had worked in the kolkhoz until her marriage in 1952. She then transferred to the sovkhoz, where she remained until her retirement in the 1970s, because her husband's house was located closer to sovkhoz land. The distinction between the two institutions was evident in a variety of conditions and practices. For example, the sovkhoz always paid salaries in cash, whereas the kolkhoz, at the time of its establishment, paid its workers in kind. Only some years later did they begin to receive partial payments in cash. The establishment of the

[6] The small numbers of letters found among church archival materials are correspondence between Russian authorities (representing the tsar) and the Bulgarian immigrants and date from 1816.

kolkhoz and sovkhoz retains significance today, following postsocialist land reforms, because an individual's allocation of land depends on the institution in which he or she previously worked.

The Land Reform Process

Commentaries about Ukrainian land reform frequently make two points: that Ukraine has one-third of the world's total area of 'black soil', the richest on earth, and that the country has been slow to privatise its most precious commodity (e.g., Ash 1998; http://myland.org.ua/en/(pressreview)/2001/5). In August 1991, Ukraine passed a declaration of independence from a Soviet Union on the verge of collapse. At the time, land reform had already been discussed and a new Land Code adopted (in March 1991) by the Supreme Council of Ukraine.[7] The reorganisation of the kolkhoz and sovkhoz sector was begun in 1992.

The first stage involved transferring landownership from the state to the institutions themselves. This was carried out by creating a new institution called, in Bulgarian, a *Kollectivno Selskohozaistvo Predpriyatie* or, in Russian, a *Kollektivnoe Selskohozyaistvennoe Predpriyatie,* that is, a Collective Agricultural Enterprise (CAE). This was a legally independent body with rights to own land and manage its affairs, but it was set up only as an intermediate or temporary measure until stage two of the reforms was carried out.[8] In Nagorna the kolkhoz was legally converted into a CAE in 1995, and the sovkhoz in 1996. Simultaneously, a land reserve fund was created by local councils across the country, subsuming about 10% of all agricultural land in Ukraine (Ash 1998: 67). Local reformers in Nagorna agreed to set aside only the minimum percentage of land for the reserve fund, leaving the rest to be divided among collective members in future privatisation.[9] From this land reserve, parcels of approximately 20 hectares were allocated to individuals interested in establishing private farms. There was also the possibility of renting more land from the council.

Since 1992, a number of presidential decrees have attempted to modify and quicken the pace of the reforms. Reform has been slowed, however, by resistance at all levels of the state, from the national parliamentary level

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[7] Ash (1998) gives a date of December 1990, but other sources (e.g., www.uceps.com.ua/eng/all/journal/2001_5/html/2.shtml, p. 4; www.fig.net/figtree/pub/fig_2002/Ts7–6/TS7_6_bondar_lilje.pdf; Lerman and Csaki 2001) stipulate March 1991.

[8] For a more detailed discussion of CAEs and the confusion associated with collective ownership, see Perrotta 2000.

[9] Local officials now speak of a 'shortage' of land in Nagorna, because the reserve fund was largely depleted after land was allocated to social sphere workers and private farmers.

(see Ash 1998) to the regional (*oblast*) and local levels. Louise Perrotta (2000) discusses reasons for delays at the regional level, including the benefits of obstruction for regional officials who are genuinely concerned about avoiding falling production in the context of land fragmentation and at the same time anxious to maintain their power base. She also shows that district officials were far more likely to push forward the reforms than officials farther up the hierarchy (Perrotta 2000: 160–61). Other sources identify local 'inertia' as a problem.[10]

Following the formation of the CAEs in Nagorna in the mid-1990s, villagers received legal documents that conferred their rights to own land, although the allocation of specific plots began only six or seven years later. A revised Land Code that went into effect in January 2002 regulated private ownership, usage, and transfer of land and, rather than merely recognising an individual's right to a share of land, as the reforms of the 1990s had done, at last stipulated that land be distributed with physically demarcated boundaries.[11]

The distribution of title deeds—the second stage of reform—began in some places as early as 2001 but is still under way and will take some years to complete.[12] Locally, two organisations are involved in this process at the village level. Valeria from Nagorna, who was trained as a livestock expert (*zootekhnik*), is one of a number of specialists who works for the Land Resource Committee in Reni, the district capital. Her organisation deals with interpreting the laws and dictating the general terms in which land issues are dealt with locally. In 2000, she had already held this position for six years, working closely with the *sel'sovet* (village council) to implement decisions concerning land, both household plots and previously state-owned land. The sel'sovet is the second local organisation actively involved in land reforms. It is made up of 20 elected representatives. Clearly, the relationship between Valeria and these councillors is of fundamental importance: in this case, good communication between them may have much to do with Valeria's having been secretary of the sel'sovet for six years before taking up the Land Resource Committee position. But when one enquires about land reform, it is two former kolkhoz figures who are attributed a leading role in advising the sel'sovet. One is a female economist, presently deputy head of the dis-

[10] For example, see www.uceps.com.ua/eng/all/journal/2001_5/html/content.shtml, p. 51.

[11] Official documents cite 2002 as the date of the Land Code. Kaneff was repeatedly informed by local and district officials, however, that this reform went into effect in February 2001.

[12] The picture on the ground is by no means clear. The last decade has been characterised by a set of laws which lack clarity to such an extent that even lawyers and policymakers can provide no 'coherent interpretations' (see Perrotta 2000: 163).

trict (*raion*) council; the other is an agricultural specialist, a former head of the kolkhoz, who now leads one of the new cooperatives in Nagorna.

Entitlement to land is determined not by the number of years an individual worked in a kolkhoz or sovkhoz but by his or her affiliation with or membership in it.[13] By law, entitlement to a land certificate was based on one's having worked or been pensioned from a kolkhoz or sovkhoz by May 1995. All those eligible and still alive in 1995 were entitled to an equal share of land. In households where several members had worked in the socialist institutions, such as a married couple and parents-in-law living together, the household received several land certificates. Former employees of the sovkhoz each received 4.10 hectares, and kolkhoz members, 3.45 hectares. This difference was determined partly by the quality of the land (kolkhoz land is of better quality) and partly by the total amount of land available for distribution.[14]

Initially the intention was to grant land only to those who had worked for the sovkhoz or kolkhoz. Following national protests, however, kindergarten workers, teachers, doctors, municipal council employees, and other workers in the 'social sphere' succeeded in claiming rights to land. Social sphere workers in Nagorna were each granted 0.5 hectare from the reserve fund. Again, the cut-off point of May 1995 was used. It was up to each individual sel'sovet to decide how much it assigned to such workers. In the Nagorna case, the amount granted was less than the national maximum of 2 hectares. Local officials justified this as fair in that it assured, at least in principal, that everyone had a means of livelihood: social sphere workers received a salary—income apart from the land—whereas former workers at the agricultural institutions depended entirely on the land for their livelihood. In practice, as many social sphere workers as agricultural workers have lost their jobs.

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[13] Non-land agricultural property, such as buildings and machinery, is treated differently and has not yet been privatised. When it is distributed, it will be done according to the number of years an individual worked in the kolkhoz or sovkhoz. Those who worked fewer than ten years in a collective are not entitled to any share. At the end of 2001, the mayor attended seminars in town to receive training in how this next step of privatisation will be organised. In the meantime, the property is used by the newly established cooperatives.

[14] In the district capital, Reni, ex-kolkhoz members received seven hectares of land each. Thus the amount varied from place to place depending on local conditions. Variations in actual plot sizes take into account the different quality of the land, but all title deeds are required to have the same monetary value.

Land reforms also involved the privatisation of household plots, which were regulated by a separate law. Every family is entitled to 0.5 hectare.[15] The national law set a maximum of 1 hectare, but in Nagorna, where land was not so plentiful and where the reserve fund was depleted, the sel'sovet decided to limit the entitlement to 0.5 hectare.[16] This land can be inherited and sold. Many families in Nagorna hold this land on the actual site where their house is situated and had worked their plot throughout the socialist period. Those who have less land surrounding their houses are each entitled to claim an additional plot outside the village.

By the end of 2001, 20 documents of ownership—title deeds, or 'government acts'—defining the precise plots owned by individuals had been issued in Nágorna. According to local officials, no formal timetable existed for completing the process. Nor was it running smoothly. There was considerable grumbling by those who believed they were entitled to land but were not granted land share certificates, the basis for later ownership documents. For example, many social sphere workers learned too late of the government's change of heart about granting them certificates. By the time they were informed of the change in policy and applied to the sel'sovet, no land was left in the reserve fund. Other tensions concerned people who had certificates without being entitled to them. For example, Oliya finished school in 1995 and then did a two-year cooking course in the town of Ismaiil. By her own admission, her education was not sponsored by the kolkhoz, and she had no attachment to the collective until her return to the village in 1997, when she took a job in the kolkhoz canteen. When Kaneff asked her landlady why Oliya had received a certificate, Baba Mina replied, 'You tell me, I don't know'. She added, 'But there are other cases like this one'. The issue of entitlement, and apparent irregularities in who was or was not entitled to land shares, was the subject of many conversations and much gossip between neighbours in the village in late 2001.

In Nagorna it is the six new cooperatives that have replaced the kolkhoz and sovkhoz that are pushing forward the handing out of title deeds.

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[15] Valeria explained that a family is a married couple, which has the right to 0.5 hectare. Sons over 18 years of age, irrespective of their marital status, are also entitled to 0.5 hectare. Daughters are not, because 'they will marry and so gain access to the 0.5 hectare of their future husbands'.

[16] Some households do work more land than the legal maximum, but this land is not in private ownership. Instead, it is household land classified as that under *postoyano poldsvane,* that is, 'in continuous use'. Legally, an individual can have use rights for up to two hectares of household land, but only with permission of the local sel'sovet. This land cannot be inherited or sold, and if it remains unused for two years or more, the sel'sovet has the right to confiscate it and allocate it to someone else.

The deeds each cost 130 hryvnia (Uah).[17] Many villagers either do not have this money or see no point in having deed papers when they intend to remain in the cooperative. The cooperative leaders, therefore, have decided to pay for the deeds and deduct the cost from their members' payable rent at the end of the year. This is in the cooperatives' interests, because a final settlement of the landownership situation will clarify their boundaries and give them greater security. Contrary to the view held by many Western observers (and enshrined in World Bank reports), the cooperatives are by no means hindrances to reform but are leaders in the reform process. They are organising and financing privatisation, acting as mediators between national legislators and indifferent villagers.

The Present Situation: Cooperatives

Currently, the overwhelming majority of land being worked across Ukraine is in successor enterprises to the collective farms, though household plots are also important for family subsistence. Individual private farms are features of the postsocialist landscape but are relatively unimportant for overall production figures.[18]

At present, the vast majority of villagers' land is retained in the cooperative enterprises. Indeed, for most villagers it makes no economic sense to start farming one's own land. Kolya, a neighbour of Baba Mina's and a worker in the cooperative that was once the sovkhoz, explained to an informal gathering of neighbours one summer night: 'Look, add up your costs: fuel, seeds, planting, fertiliser, labour ... and where will you get a tractor from? Don't tell me that it's worth it for four hectares, it's not'.

In Nagorna, the kolkhoz and sovkhoz have been replaced by six private cooperatives, a number of individual (family) private farms, and several informal groups made up of social sphere workers who tend their land collectively. Farming on household plots has continued from Soviet times, although now it is much more important for family survival than was previously the case. Each of the four current types of landholders is discussed in what follows. These four forms of agricultural production, each founded on a specific form of privatisation and based on previous work affiliation, are the bases for newly emerging work affiliations and relationships in the village.

Unlike former kolkhoz land, sovkhoz property has remained intact and been reformed as one new cooperative with 713 members. This cooperative,

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[17] Uah is the abbreviation for the Ukraine currency, the hryvnia. The figure of 130 Uah amounts in many cases to more than one month's pension.

[18] One study gives the figure of 2% for all agricultural land under private farm cultivation in Ukraine and says that this land provides approximately 2% of agricultural produce in the country (Lerman and Csaki 2001: 1).

modelled closely on its predecessor, still carries out crop production in combination with animal husbandry (a pig farm, dairy farm, and 300 calves). It appears less successful than the others and pays less rent to its members: in 2001 this amounted to 500 kilograms of wheat plus 100 kilograms of barley. As in the other cooperatives, salaries for full-time workers are paid in wheat. Even casual labour is paid largely in kind.

The former kolkhoz presents a slightly different picture. Originally it was converted into a single cooperative, which was then divided into five cooperatives. Those who had headed the brigades in the kolkhoz (the engineer in charge of the machinery division, the agriculturalist in charge of crop production, and so on) became the leaders of the new cooperatives.[19] Thus each one is led by a previous head agriculturalist from the kolkhoz, each of whom has higher education in some field of specialisation. The organisations have a total of 954 members. Established on the basis of the irrigation system, which was structured into four separate systems (a lottery determined which cooperative would work which piece of land), four of these organisations grow only crops, having liquidated most of their livestock. The fifth controls the machinery, the petrol station, and all the buildings and supplies electricity and drinking water to the village. The other cooperatives pay it in money and produce for services rendered.

Three of the cooperatives work together closely, buying seeds and fuel together and taking joint decisions about planting. A fourth cooperative (for machinery) also works closely with them. Only one of the five remains outside this arrangement. Its leader does not consult the others or attend their meetings, and his organisation operates quite separately. He takes advice only from his own cooperative workers at their separate gatherings. His outsider status can be understood at least partly by his reduced access to social capital. When the main agricultural heads divided the land into four cooperatives, they were, according to one of them, a specialist short. They invited another agricultural specialist, a village native who had been working in another village for a number of years, to lead the fifth cooperative. The other four leaders now say, 'We can't work with him'. The 'problem' leader is setting himself up in competition, breaking out of the closed circle of shared power constituted by the others. The other leaders recognise this when they describe him as 'ambitious'. In 2001 he paid a higher rent to his members than the other cooperatives (1,000 kilograms of wheat as opposed to 600 kilograms of wheat, 100 kilograms of dried peas, and 200 kilograms of corn), which ensured that his cooperative's isolation would not cause a loss of members. But it also evoked expressions of concern by the other leaders about the creation of inequalities. They made it clear that they

[19] In late 2001 there was talk of three of the five cooperatives merging once more.

thought it better not to cause friction among the people by paying different rents, so people would not say, to quote one of the leaders, 'X has more than us'.

Although there are clear tensions among the leaders themselves, it is difficult for either the anthropologist or the villagers to get a real sense of the problem, because cooperative heads do not hold village meetings or consult with their membership. Decisions are taken behind closed doors, and the only people with whom they collaborate are the village mayor and a man named Angelovski—the 'richest' man in the village, who owns a shop, a mill, and a petrol station. Together these leaders form a closed, elite group that controls a large part of village resources.

Villagers frequently comment upon the relationship among the cooperative leaders, accusing them of failing to consult with ordinary villagers and of not 'pulling together'. One former kolkhoz worker said that the leaders 'do what they want and consult with no one'. This lack of accountability results in accusations of corruption and stealing. A mechanic in the fifth cooperative complained, 'Once there was one leader who stole; now there are five to steal!' Marusha, in speaking about these relations, asked Kaneff if she knew the Russian fairytale about the leopard, the fish, and the crab. She continued: 'They all wanted to move the same cart of hay. Well, they all tied themselves to the cart, and the leopard jumped upwards into the air, the crab went down into his hole, and the fish jumped into the water. And the hay moved in no direction at all'. Then Marusha added: 'It's exactly the same with the cooperatives—they pull in different directions. Each cooperative head pulls towards his own hole, his own place, in terms of his own interests, and the cart of hay is going nowhere!'

Informal Collectives of Social Sphere Workers

There are about 150 social sphere workers in Nagorna. Many have no land at all, either because they could not be bothered to claim any or because, by the time they found out about their entitlements, most of the land in the village reserve fund had already been allocated.

But many of those who did receive half-hectare parcels have joined to create informal groups and work their land together. One such group has 24 members, another 20, and another 12. These groups appear to have formed spontaneously. For example, the smallest group consists of 12 women who work as teachers or school helpers while their husbands work in the former sovkhoz. Their land is in previously sovkhoz territory, and they all live on that side of the village.

The groups hold informal meetings when the need arises, especially at ploughing time. However, the women, the legal owners of the land, show

less interest in it than their agricultural-worker husbands. At group meetings, joint decisions are taken about what should be grown. Most members are not involved in actually working the land; they share the costs of sowing, ploughing, and fertilising, but the work is carried out by a small number of the group, perhaps three or four of the men. Because the groups own no machinery, at least some tasks are carried out by people hired from one of the cooperatives. At such times the group members merely organise and supervise the work. The harvest is divided equally among all the members, after all costs have been paid. It comes to far more than cooperative members receive as rent from their three- to four-hectare plots (the latter is, after all, only a proportion of the total production from cooperative land).

These groups are not legally registered organisations. One member of the largest group explained that 'whoever wants can take their land and get out whenever they want'. Although the members of each group have their land in adjacent blocks, there is nothing to stop someone from taking his or her block and working it separately. This is precisely what seemed to be occurring in the second year of operation of these groups: because of internal disagreements, particularly over the issue of work, they were splitting up into smaller groups. Some in the group are seen to work more than others. As Tanya, a schoolteacher, told Kaneff, 'You know how it is, one does all the work, another ten stand and watch'. She continued: 'I'm a woman and don't understand what needs to be done, but there are those like Vito and Sasho who spend a whole afternoon with the tractor. ... I'm grateful to all the men who run around, and it's only fair that they receive a bit more than I do from the land. But some don't see it that way'.

Private Farmers

Eight households in Nagorna are involved in private farming, using land that belongs to people outside the family. In all known cases, the wives and adult children are as active in the enterprises as the husbands. In other words, the farms are family enterprises. The land farmed is obtained from a variety of sources. In the early 1990s, individuals could receive up to 20 hectares free from the sel'sovet and could rent a further 20 hectares from the council. Combining this with their family's land from the kolkhoz or sovkhoz and with land rented from other former members, fairly sizeable holdings have been established.[20]

[20] Thus the state is no longer the sole leaser of land in the country; private farms are also leasers of land (Lerman and Csaki 2001: xiv–xv). Such a system is apparently quite unusual in other countries of the former Soviet Union (Lerman and Csaki 2001: 6).

One example is Misho, who, with his wife, started a farm in 1994 (the first in the village was established in 1991). Altogether they work 170 hectares, most of which is rented. They work the land in a number of large units—70 hectares in one place, 30 in another, and so on. Misho pays a higher rent than the cooperatives—20% of the produce from the fields, in comparison with the 8% or less (Kaneff's estimate) that the cooperatives give to their members. The couple established a goose farm and a pig farm, which has expanded to 800 pigs, and in 2001 they launched a dairy farm with five dairy cows and six calves. The wife is in charge of the animal husbandry side of the farm, while Misho concerns himself largely with the crops—corn, sunflowers, wheat, and barley (largely for animal feed). They own the first private combine harvester in the region.

The farm is largely a family business: their two children are still young and attend school and technical college, but other family members are employed and paid a salary. For example, one sideline activity is an oil press for sunflowers. In the autumn of 2001, Misho's sister was working the press in the garage of his house. She, together with Misho and another casual worker, worked around the clock pressing oil for the Ismaiil and Odessa markets. Misho also employs four other full-time workers: two tractorists and two workers at the pig farm. The small, family nature of the business sets a limit to expansion plans. Misho explained that a number of members from the present cooperatives had recently offered him their land for lease, but he had turned them down because he does not wish to work more land, especially if it cannot be given in one substantial block.

The success of fermery such as Misho can be attributed to several factors.[21] Successful farmers established their enterprises early in the 1990s, which allowed them to take advantage of government credits offered at the time. They also tend to be couples who held a variety of jobs when employed in the kolkhoz or sovkhoz. Misho, for example, worked as a kolkhoz mechanic and as a driver of tractors and lorries; his wife worked in the dairy farm and later in the building sector of the kolkhoz. Another private farmer boasted that he never spent more than three years doing the same job in the sovkhoz, which gave him a rounded education in agriculture.

Further, successful farmers have tended to expand into related enterprises. Misho presently owns an oil press, a pig farm, and a dairy farm and is

[21] Kaneff has recorded only two examples of farming failures. The first fermer in the village originally applied for land jointly with two other men—one a pensioner, the other a tractor driver. The fermer informed Kaneff that the other two men 'gave up' after the first year. Kaneff subsequently found out that the pensioner ended up buying a tractor, which he still owns, with his share of the credits (he has no farm). The other man is currently serving a sentence in gaol. Not everyone, the deputy mayor concluded, can handle the hard work involved in establishing a farm.

planning to start a vineyard, a project receiving assistance from both the British Know How Fund and the Ukraine government. None of the farmers to whom Kaneff has spoken was a previous kolkhoz or sovkhoz manager, so their present success cannot be attributed to any special privileges attained through positions of power. Their access to social capital was limited to the experiences they, like so many others in the village, gained while working in the socialist agricultural institutions. Nor are they descendants of wealthy kulak families, most of whom live in urban centres in the region.

Despite the success of these farms, the risks involved in starting a farm were, and still are, high. Misho described to Kaneff how 'even my own mother didn't want me to leave the kolkhoz, where she had worked all her life in the dairy farm. She told me, "I'll die and you won't be able [to afford] to bury me". But now', he concluded with a smile, 'she is keeping quiet'.

Unlike the cases described by Myriam Hivon (1995, 1998) and by Liesl Gambold Miller and Patrick Heady (this volume) for Russia, in this Ukraine example there seems to be no resentment towards private farmers. In part this may be because the persons concerned do not flaunt their wealth by building larger houses or changing their lifestyles in drastic ways. Most of their profits have been reinvested in their farms. They are also active, as are the cooperatives, in fulfilling their duties to the community. They pay local taxes and support village institutions such as the school and kindergarten by providing free milk and bread. They do not own much more land than anyone else in the village, so it is clear to villagers that they get their wealth through work rather than through unfair or unequal land distributions. Private farmers' success is accepted in the community because work is seen as a 'quality' to which everyone has access. Private farmers' success is attributed to their greater commitment to work.

Household Plots

Household plots remain, as they were during Soviet times, an important part of family-oriented subsistence activity. Moreover, the relationship between household plots and large agricultural institutions—now private cooperatives—remains one of interdependence. The land, or rather the grain rent obtained from cooperative land, is crucial for maintaining the household, in several ways. It provides feed for the animals on which households are becoming increasingly dependent for meat. It also provides householders with their staple, bread. Since the mid-1990s, the great majority of villagers

have been unable to afford to buy bread and are forced to mill wheat into flour from which they bake their weekly bread.[22]

The subsistence nature of household production should be stressed. Occasionally, as in the case of the household where Kaneff lived in Nagorna, the grapes that constitute part of the produce from the plot might not be made into wine and consumed by the family but sold to a local winery for cash. But such cases are unusual, and little household produce ends up being sold at the market.[23] One reason is the lack of convenient transport between Nagorna and the nearest market in the district capital, some 40 km away. The Soviet distinction between collective production and household production for family needs lives on, even though household production has increased in importance since 1991. Rising unemployment and the collapse of a cash economy—those who remain in state employment face months without being paid their salaries, and new cooperatives are short of cash and thus pay their workers in kind—have resulted in increased dependence on, and expansion of, household production (see also Lerman and Csaki 2001: xvi; Perrotta 2000: 169). The expansion involves intensifying previous activities (e.g., raising a greater number of animals for meat) and establishing new ones, many of which, such as baking bread at home, are seen as a burden.

Even with increased household production, no family can be entirely self-sufficient. Marusha commented one day, 'If only I got 30 Uah a month and Kolyo [her husband] did too, we'd be OK. People say we have everything and don't need money. It's true, we have a lot, but still you need money for some things—water, electricity, gas, sometimes you feel like eating an ice-cream!' A lack of cash in the village means barter is common. Villagers swap wheat obtained as rent from the cooperative for goods that arrive by truck from other regions of the country. They also use grain in place of cash—for example, in paying school fees, which have been set by a financially strained school unable to cover general maintenance or expenses such as the winter heating bill. In 2001 the staff decided to charge parents a fee, which was set at 30 Uah per month or three sacks of wheat; the school then sold the wheat for cash.

Households find ways to make money. Those who have cars provide taxi service to villagers able to pay; households with several land certificates, and thus an excess of grain, sell some of their tonnes for cash. Many households grow onions as a cash crop (an activity encouraged since the mid-1980s), although not on household plots: a *delyanka* of land (0.4 hectare) is rented from one of the cooperatives. Villagers pay for the ploughing

[22] Because household survival is now so fundamentally dependent on the grains villagers receive as rent, there is no talk of selling household land.

[23] In this respect Nagorna is atypical, according to statistics provided by Perrotta (2000: 170).

and sowing but weed and harvest the onions themselves. For many families, especially those who have lost their full-time cooperative positions, this constitutes the only source of monetary income in the household.

The Azerbaijani Case

Prior to the establishment of Soviet rule in Azerbaijan in 1920, the settlement of Tezekend was mentioned as a German colony. It was referred to as the train station (*stansiya*) of the district (*raion*) of Şemkir (N. Ibrahimov 1998: 36). As in other settlements in the same raion and in neighbouring districts, the German colonists were the first to establish vineyards and wine production. The Hummel brothers are said to have bought land in Şemkir in 1906 and started producing wine there (Auch 2001: 91–98; N. Ibrahimov 1998: 35).[24] Land was owned by the German brothers and worked by agricultural labourers.[25] With the outbreak of the First World War and the expropriation laws concerning German colonists' property in the Russian empire, the Hummel brothers, like other large, enterprising German families, were killed (Auch 2001: 96). In 1929 their vineyards and wine factory became a sovkhoz named after Ezizbegov, one of the 26 Baku commissioners of the Bolshevik revolution in Azerbaijan.[26] It is likely that their agricultural enterprise became one of the first sovkhozy in Azerbaijan, because such a large production unit with a single owner conformed to the image of the ideological enemy.[27]

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[24] N. Ibrahimov (1998: 36) refers directly to the Hummel brothers' buying land in *stansiya* Şemkir: in 1906 they paid 45,000 rubles—to whom is unclear—and bought 450 *desyatin* of land (approximately 492 hectares), of which they cultivated 60 *desyatin* (65.5 hectares) of vineyards. They built a wine factory with a capacity of 150 thousand *vedra* (approximately 1.8 million litres) of wine per year, which later became the wine factory of the sovkhoz. They also built an underground spring irrigation system (*kehriz*), which still functions. According to the local archives, in 1932 the vineyards of the sovkhoz (which was established in 1929) had already been reduced to 33 hectares. In 1933 there were 377 workers and labourers in the sovkhoz. In 1961 the vineyards still covered only 37 hectares of the sovkhoz area.

[25] According to Auch (2001: 85), labourers for the other, much larger wine-producing family enterprise, that of the Forer brothers, came not only from surrounding districts but from as far away as Baku and even Persia. The enterprise created by the Hummel brothers could, by analogy, be assumed to have provided employment at least for many of the local Armenian and Azeri families.

[26] Şemkir branch of state archives, fond no. 42. The document indicates that the vineyards which had belonged to private persons had been 'nationalised' (*ictimaileşdirilme*).

[27] Some German colonists, probably workers, must have stayed on until the Second World War, because elderly people still remember their deportation in 1941. They were deported by trains to Kazakhstan and never came back, unlike some other deported peoples of the Soviet Union.

The kolkhoz in Tezekend was also established in 1929. Archival documents show that collectivisation encompassed about 37% of peasant households in 1931, 54.6% in 1933, and 73% in 1934. In 1934 the sovkhoz had three tractors, and there was only one combine harvester in the whole raion. The raion had a total land fund of 157,338 hectares, of which the only sovkhoz then, the one in Tezekend, had about 453 hectares (about the same amount as that expropriated from the Hummel brothers). The kolkhozy cultivated 85,117 hectares, and those who did not join the collectives had 28,721 hectares.

The name of the settlement, Tezekend, which means 'new village', was first mentioned in the records in 1935. In 1951 the kolkhoz in Tezekend was merged with four other kolkhozy in the vicinity into a single unit. In 1955 the Tezekend *sovieti,* or village administrative unit, had a population of 5,882 people. Until 1964 there still was only one sovkhoz in the whole district of Şemkir, whereas in the same year there were 28 kolkhozy; their numbers decreased from the 1950s onwards.[28] The borders of the Tezekend sel'sovet have since changed several times. Agricultural production underwent restructuring such that in the late 1960s, cotton and wine grapes became the most important products. Partly because of changes in state agricultural planning as dictated by Moscow, western regions of Azerbaijan were then expected to reduce their cotton production in the 1970s. Nevertheless, overall agricultural policy under Heidar Aliyev, the Communist Party leader from 1969 onwards, emphasised the opposite—that is, increasing cotton and wine production (see Aliyev 1997). Retrospectively, his period is associated, especially by critics, with efforts to fulfil the ever-greater production plans in the 'socialist competition for increasing productivity'.

This was the time of *pripiska:* production figures were falsified nationwide to fulfil the plan, peaking in the corruption scandal of the early 1980s (see Humphrey 1998: 224). Although almost all segments of society (students, medical workers, teachers, etc.) were involved in faking figures and hiding actual agricultural activities, some officials at the lower echelons of party administration and agricultural production structures (e.g., sovkhoz and kolkhoz directors and bookkeepers) got lengthy sentences, whereas the party leadership went mostly unpunished. The corruption scandal influenced people's relationship to agriculture on the whole: agriculture was seen as a

[28] *Azerbaycan SSR Kend Teserrufatı 1953–1964, 1. Hisse Istatistik Mecmua* 1966: 9–10. Most of the settlers in Tezekend were Azeris deported in 1948 from Armenia, who worked on a cotton-producing kolkhoz. The families of these deportees are still known as Yeraz, an abbreviated version of Yerivan Azeri. Necefov (1998: 213) cites governmental sources for a figure of 591 deportees settling in Şemkir in 1948–49. The official sources referred to this as 'immigration'. Other raion, especially farther to the south, received more settlers.

profitable activity but one intimately related to corrupt practices and networks. Corruption in the production and sale of agricultural produce seems to have escalated in the perestroika years, followed by the first several years of independence. During perestroika and Gorbachev's anti-alcohol campaign in the late 1980s, vineyards were reduced drastically.[29] Even before the recent land reforms, almost all remaining vines were uprooted, simultaneously with the dissolution of formal economic relations with Moscow and other former Soviet republics.

Vegetables and fruits, however, produced on household plots as cash crops, seem to have provided an important source of additional income and even profit for some households. This was especially the case in the late socialist and perestroika years for one neighbourhood in Tezekend that had larger-than-village-average household plots. In this neighbourhood, inhabited by kolkhoz workers, households usually had 24 *sotka* (0.24 hectare) of land.[30] Many surveyed households stated that they had begun growing vegetables on these plots in the late 1980s and early 1990s for sale in local and regional markets, as well as in Russia. Greenhouses for tomatoes and cucumbers were becoming popular. Seeing the profits, increasing numbers of households began applying for household plots in those years; they were either given smaller plots or had to resort to bribing the authorities.

At the end of the Soviet period in Azerbaijan, the land and property system was as follows. Households had household plots (*heyet yanı* or *mehle*) on which to build a house and plant a garden. These were normally allocated after one made an application to start one's own household. Although these plots were not formally private property, they were treated as such, since they could be sold (without official registration) or inherited and were rarely confiscated from the occupants or the user's heir by the village administration or the sovkhoz or kolkhoz. The sizes of household plots varied according to when they were allocated. In the 1960s, plots for kolkhoz workers were 0.24 hectare; later, as land became scarce, they were reduced to 0.16 and then to 0.09 hectare. In some of the central village neighbourhoods where residential population was dense, plots were no more than 0.02–0.03 hectare. Apart from household plots, land belonged officially to the state and collective agricultural production units (sovkhoz and kolkhoz). But its ownership structure was already changing during the late

[29] According to Mehman Necmeddinov, head of the vine production unit of the Agricultural Ministry, in 1985 there were 250,000 hectares of vineyards in Azerbaijan, of which approximately 100,000 hectares had been destroyed by 1993, due to the anti-alcohol campaign of the perestroika years (*Azerbaycan,* 8 January 1993).

[30] Villagers use the measure *sotka,* which is 0.01 hectare; that is, 100 *sotka* = 1 hectare.

1980s, and it continued to do so after 1991, as was the case in other Soviet states.

The Land Reform Process

Azerbaijan became an independent republic in 1991. Both before and after that year, in developments similar to those in Russia (see Gray, Gambold Miller and Heady, this volume), the political centres in Moscow and Baku, as well as agriculturalists themselves, continued their efforts to form new collectives for agricultural production. In Azerbaijan, debates over reforms and the restructuring of state and collective agrarian units, which were published in newspapers and academic journals (see, e.g., Gurbanova 1990; Niftullayev 1992; Verdiyev 1996), touched on endemic agrarian problems such as underproduction, hidden unemployment, and the intensification of rural-urban migration due to the lack of rural infrastructure. A recurring theme in these debates was the question of ownership and the fact that kolkhoz workers were uninterested in production because they had no (ownership) relationship to land. Only if producers were given land would the production level rise, it was often said (Aliyev 1997: 149; Gurbanova 1990: 46). Others argued against simply dividing the land among rural residents and advised instead that it be distributed to those who were economically able producers. That is, land should be given to those who were experienced in agricultural production (Allahverdiyev 1993: 1). Another problem often mentioned was the demography and history of Azerbaijan. Land shortage was a continual problem there, and out-migration a traditional response. Tezekend exemplified this pattern in the 1990s.

With the restructuring measures taken in agricultural production before the major land reform of 1996, people in Tezekend were given the possibility of renting land from the sovkhoz, getting help from it in the form of equipment and fertilisers, and becoming fermery by registering as such after 1992. In order to do this, several households got together and sold produce to the sovkhoz and some at the markets. Between 1992 and 1996, about eight people in Tezekend took the lead in forming such fermer collectives, each renting up to 40 hectares of land from the sovkhoz.

There are contradictory reports about these fermery collectives. Some people associate them with corruption, in the sense that the leading figures (the bookkeeper of the sovkhoz, the brigadier, the *agronom,* etc.) received most of the benefits and surplus and did not distribute the earnings among the other members. Some ordinary members of such fermery groups say that they gave their name to one of these leading figures simply in order to have the period counted as 'work days' and added to their future pension. These groups seem to have been organised primarily on the basis of kinship alli-

ances; in some cases, brigadiers kept the members of their brigade together. The fate of the fermery changed dramatically with the land reform of 1996, after which the collectives had to give back the land they had rented out. Only a few managed to stay together as kin groups and continue working the land together.

Land reform was carried out in four phases.[31] The preparatory phase, which followed the change of government from Elçibey to Aliyev in 1993, included discussions about the experiences of land reform in other countries as well as the present situation of the agricultural sector in Azerbaijan. The conferences and meetings held in these years brought specialists and producers together to discuss different perspectives and opinions among the public. Although the official description of the phase suggests that thorough and exhaustive debates were held on the concepts and procedures of land and agricultural reforms in Azerbaijan, it overlooks the fact that this period was one of political crisis and war. The public and political agenda was dominated by the war over the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Region. Moreover, such debates over the pros and cons of privatising land had been going on since the perestroika years.

During the second phase, in 1995–96, several laws were passed: 'On the basic principles of agrarian reform', 'On reforming sovkhozy and kolkhozy', 'On land reform', and 'On cooperation'. The state commission for agrarian reform was created by presidential decree in March 1995. The commission had subsections in the regional districts (raion), each of which had 15–17 members. These were various officials from the state bureaucracy, including the executive committee of the raion, its land committee, the veterinary office, the statistical office, the office for state property, tax, and agrarian affairs, the financial office and banks, consumers' organisations, and of course the agrarian production structures (*agroprom*). There were also local committees, each with 11–13 members recruited from the village kolkhoz and sovkhoz units.

These committees worked out the programme for the major land reform, which was to privatise land and other kolkhoz and sovkhoz property. The land reform law set June 1996 as the cut-off date for determining eligibility for land shares, or *pay*, in Azerbaijani. All those who were registered as residents of a rural community (*kend*) and as living on land belonging to a kolkhoz or sovkhoz were to receive equal shares of privatised land from the former collective. Part of this state land was to be retained as property of the future communal administrative bodies (*belediyeler*), and some sovkhozy

[31] See I. Ibrahimov 2001. Ibrahimov is a leading bureaucrat and director of the Office of Land Reform and Development of Private Business in the Ministry of Agriculture.

were kept for livestock or seed breeding purposes. But most land was privatised.

The criteria for eligibility and the specific cut-off date created problems. Residency was determined on the basis of Soviet registration books. The Soviet system of registration (*propiska*) did not necessarily reflect actual residence, but it was accepted as a guide to property claims by households. For instance, in Yalçın-Heckmann's host family, the mother had married into the village and had never changed her registration from the city of Ganja, where she had inherited her parents' flat. Similarly, many other women who had married into Tezekend from other places were not registered in the village, and many men and even families who had moved out some years earlier but who still expected to inherit household plots and houses in Tezekend never changed their residence registration. This was especially the case with labour migrants in Russia. If they were still on the registration books as residents of Tezekend in June 1996, they received land shares. Similarly to the case of Nagorna in Ukraine, people who died before this cut-off date and children born after that date were ineligible to receive shares.

The third phase of land reform, in 1997–98, saw the implementation of the laws and decrees. Sovkhoz and kolkhoz property was delineated and evaluated according to soil quality and irrigation. Persons in each locality eligible to receive land and shares in other property were listed. During this phase, problems in interpreting and administering the laws and decrees seem to have been common. For example, the liquidation of sovkhoz and kolkhoz structures involved dividing the production units into separate bodies. In Tezekend, the wine factory was separated from the vineyards and other cultivation units and was managed by a separate liquidation committee. Opinions about the fairness and legality of the liquidation committees diverge. The representative of the State Property Ministry in the raion had one set of ideas about which property of the wine factory was to be distributed, and the villagers another. According to the representative, because a presidential decree had written off all the debts of industrial enterprises, the decree should also apply to the former management's debts to the former workers. Hence, the immovable property assets of the wine factory (which had been part of the sovkhoz in Tezekend and which were to be taken over by a person or group as the new private owner) could not be distributed as privatisation shares (*emlak payı*) among its former workers. Most of the former workers expected some shares in this.

In the fourth phase of the reforms, 1999–2000, some measures for aiding the development of small agricultural firms and producers were enacted. For instance, agricultural producers were freed from certain taxes for five

years, and fuel was to be provided 50% cheaper to agricultural producers. Only the tax on agricultural land was retained. It was supposed to be collected by the newly elected local administrative body (*belediye*), as opposed to the sel'sovet of former times. The new belediyeler, however, had difficulty enforcing payment and were hoping for further administrative and legal adjustments that would give them the power and personnel to collect taxes.

During this phase, the actual assignment of privatised land was carried out with a lottery. First, in each rural settlement, the total amount of sovkhoz and kolkhoz land was divided by the number of eligible residents; this gave the size of the share of land to be given to each eligible person. Sizes varied considerably from one settlement to another, depending on amount of available land and population density. In Tezekend, the amount was one of the smallest: 0.14 hectare. In the neighbouring village, the *pay* per person was 0.5 hectare, and in Ismayilli, the other raion of research, *pay* size was 1.0 hectare per person.

Next, eligible household members were treated as a unit for purposes of the lottery—that is, they received a set of individual shares located adjacent to one another. The computerised lottery assigned shares in certain localities to households or groups of households, which had to discover the exact location of their shares. The distribution of plots took soil quality into consideration, so many households in Tezekend got two types of shares, one in a dry-farming area and one in the former vineyard area, which had better soil and irrigation facilities. Although this principle was supposed to guarantee an equal division of the land among the recipients, it also fragmented the land shares even further. If a household with five eligible members, for example, was to receive a total of 0.7 hectare (5×0.14), its land was not all in one piece but was divided into vineyard and dry-farming areas.

Not only households but also other groups—of families, kin, and neighbours—were given the opportunity to enter the lottery as a unit and thus to receive land shares adjacent to one another. Some of those who followed this strategy had an interest not only in kinship but also in keeping a specific piece of land that had been taken out of the sovkhoz under the pre-1996 fermer laws. This practice did not guarantee the continuity of such plots, though occasionally groups managed to retain certain pieces of land by bribing local land reform administrators. Seyran, for instance, a woman who had been a sovkhoz brigadier and a *kahraman ana* ('victorious mother', with her ten children), became a fermer in 1994, together with her adult children and some neighbours. When the land reform was to be implemented, she was concerned to keep the same piece of land. She says she bribed the

committee, entered the lottery with her group, and got the outcome she wanted. But she was one of very few fermery who managed to do so.

Given this legal and administrative framework and its procedures, how have people reacted to privatisation in Tezekend? They express many criticisms of its methods of implementation. First, they dispute the preparation of the maps for the distributed land. Criticisms of the cartographic work draw attention to its impracticality: the landscape is divided into neat, equally sized shares on the map, but the shares are too narrow to be ploughed by a tractor without wasting land. This forces owners of adjacent plots to co-ordinate their agricultural activities.

Second, people say that taking registration records as the basis for eligibility did not reflect the actual composition of households or family relationships. Non-registered members of a household, for example, did not receive shares. If an adult married son, upon applying for a garden plot from the sel'sovet, had received recognition as a separate household but had not actually separated his household from the parental one by building a separate house for himself,[32] he received his share of land separately from (and sometimes away from) his parental family's share.[33] This meant further fragmentation and made cultivation difficult, practically and economically.

Third, people point out that titles to land are given to household heads as registered in village records, and members of the household are listed as collective shareholders in the titles. This might raise inheritance problems in the future, because an individual's share in the land, with its physical location, is not made clear. For example, should the land be divided if a son or daughter forms his or her own household?

Other complaints refer to insufficient assessment of soil quality, the distance of plots, and the poor availability of water and irrigation facilities. These complaints and contestations reflect the way land is increasingly perceived, especially by producers, as *one factor* in production. It needs to be complemented with other factors—technology, labour and cash investments, and commercially favourable marketing conditions.

Applying the land reforms and handing out land titles has involved continuous conflicts and tensions in Tezekend. When Yalçın-Heckmann first arrived there and was getting to know the local leaders in the village, she regularly visited the office of the mayor, where conflicts could be witnessed. People were coming in groups of two or three, sometimes with kin alone but sometimes with other intermediaries to help to fight their case, to be shown

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[32] The term for a village household in Azerbaijani, *teserrufat,* reflects the economic sense of being a household—that is, a production and consumption unit.

[33] This was the case if the son's household had not made the special application for entering the lottery with the parental (and actual) household.

by the mayor the location of their land share. When they discovered the location, there was inevitably an outcry. The mayor claimed he was given this task mainly because he lived in the locality and not because he was involved in designing the map or deciding who got which share. (It is also probable that he received the job because he had the strength to deal with protests from landholders.) It was embarrassing for him to have an ethnographer around to see people accusing him of corruption and fraud. 'How come you and your brother and your daughter and all their families have their shares right next to the best irrigation?' he was often asked. His explanation was that land was a limited good: some parts were of better quality than other parts, and those who got the bad parts were bound to complain and cry fraud. This indicates some of the structural problems of dealing equitably with varying qualities of land and irrigation facilities. Such tensions were often expressed in everyday conversation; many people complained that the shares they received were too far away, too fragmented, or too lacking in irrigation facilities to be economically cultivated.

Yalçın-Heckmann analysed the Tezekend data on land deeds and the actual cultivation of the new *pay* shares. Of the sample of 74 households, 39% had not picked up their deeds. The reasons were many, but a common one seemed to be lack of interest, owing to lack of means to cultivate distant and non-irrigated land. Of those who took their deeds, 60% were engaged in cultivation, but two-thirds of those had given their share to someone else to cultivate. In other words, only one-third of those who picked up their deeds were actually cultivating their own pieces of land. The rest of the land lay fallow or was being used as pasture for sheep and cattle.

The land reform of 1996, by emphasising residence as the criterion for eligibility, ignored all other factors that influenced the value and use of land. The difficulties involved in privatising land—the small sizes of plots, irrigation problems, and the lack of financial assistance and marketing facilities—have contributed to changing the meaning of land for local villagers. This is especially true for the two different types of land, that located around the household (*heyet yanı*) and that farther away (*pay toprağı*). Presently, household plots, which are used for cultivating vegetables and fruits for cash, are the more highly valued, because they are close at hand and have irrigation, even if sparse. For example, 0.06–0.08 hectare of land for a household plot in one good neighbourhood, with water, now costs at least US$300, whereas one woman's fairly fertile *pay* land of approximately 0.5 hectare was sold for US$500.

Household Plots

At present, the dominant form of agricultural activity in Tezekend is household farming, especially on household plots. Such plots are officially registered at the district land office as private property, and in the summer of 2002 belediyes began distributing titles to them. Having received household plots and shares in the land of the former sovkhoz and kolkhoz, all households are now considered in legal and political terms to be private farmers. Again, not all privatised land is actually being cultivated, and a large majority of households engaged in family farming cultivate household plots (*mehle*) rather than their land shares (*pay*). Households with members experienced in agriculture seem to find it easier to engage in cultivation, at least on household plots. These plots are intensively cultivated, especially if they are large and produce cash crops such as cucumbers, tomatoes, herbs, onions, pomegranates, and kaki fruit.[34] The marketing of produce from household plots is the main source of income for many families, although the work is hard. Former sovkhoz workers still feel nostalgia for the conditions of those times, when they were able to take holidays, receive premiums for increased productivity, and enjoy job security and even the means to market their own produce with state support in other former Soviet republics.

Households that have the possibility of cultivating both household plots and the newly acquired *pay* are mostly those that have been able to diversify their labour, networks, and capital resources. On the whole, the better-quality land is under cultivation, if not by the owners themselves then by others who rent the land. Households with fewer members, with single and older female heads, with thin networks, and with overall scarce resources tend to rent their *pay* to their neighbours, if there is a demand for it. Those who have poor-quality land usually find it difficult to cultivate, but they do so if they have no alternative source of income, such as migrants' remittances.

Another important restriction on engagement in cultivation is household composition. Single-parent families and single-person households have less possibility to mobilise labour or cash resources. Indeed, among such families one sees sheer rural poverty. Yalçın-Heckmann's household survey showed that many such households were surviving on the margins of economic existence and were completely dependent on support from the community.[35]

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[34] Kaki, the fruit of the Japanese persimmon tree, sells well in Russia.

[35] Villagers believe it is necessary to support the helpless and the poor in a Muslim community, and the fact that the current state system has withdrawn from such support was criticised as the 'immorality of capitalism', in contrast to the 'morality of the Soviet system'.

One of the neighbours of Yalçın-Heckmann's host family was such a case. The household consisted of an elderly woman whose husband lived with his sons from a former marriage. The woman lived in squalor, had no heat in winter, and burned plastic trash for cooking in her stove, which caused her wealthy neighbours to complain about the bad smells coming from her house. She received no systematic support from any state or local authority, but she often received cooked food from Yalçın-Heckmann's host family and offers of a bath at a neighbour's or of having her laundry washed. Her case was fairly typical for single-person female households not being supported by close relatives.

Cultivation of Pay

At present, all agricultural activities in Tezekend have to be organised by individuals and households. No cooperatives, associations, or information centres exist for agricultural support. Kinship, friendship, and neighbourhood relationships offer alternative strategies for collective agricultural activity. Households to whom one is related are seen as natural partners in cultivating one's land share and exchanging labour, capital, and other help. Sometimes neighbours and friends also join to cultivate adjacent shares. Such collective activity usually depends on someone's taking the initiative and on the availability of some capital. Yalçın-Heckmann's host family, for instance, had entered the lottery with a friend's family and their related households. The friend, Firuz, had been a fermer in Tezekend before the 1996 land reform, and he wanted to keep his fermer land. He asked his kin and friends to enter the lottery with him—and apparently paid bribes to be allocated the same land, although the size of his plot shrank after the reform. The host family thus received good-quality land, but the *pay* was cultivated by Firuz, who neither paid rent nor gave anything in kind as payment to the family.

The host family decided to start cultivating its share on its own in the autumn of 2002. The family members took their own share, together with that of the household head's brother's family, out of Firuz's total. This apparently involved some conflict between the household head and Firuz, who did not want to give away any of the land he had been cultivating for some years. He wanted to offer the family a share-cropping arrangement, but years of receiving no payments from him and the urgent need to make money—even if it meant engaging in agriculture, for this family with no

prior agricultural experience[36]—gave the host family little incentive not to go its own way and plant some wheat for the first time in 2002. Here, friendship and kinship relations can be seen to offer strategies of collective agricultural engagement, but such alliances occur primarily among those who own land with better soil quality and some irrigation. If the host family's *pay* had not been in the better-quality (*bağ*) vineyard area, the family would not have had the means and the courage to get into agricultural production on its own.

Large-Scale Private Farmers

A third development in Tezekend, in addition to the increased cultivation of cash crops on household plots and the cultivation of privatised *pay* by kin clusters, is the emergence of some large private farmers who rent the *pay* of many households and grow wheat on as many as 114 hectares. The Tezekend household sample included four families who were cultivating up to 20 hectares of land apiece. Apart from these, another eight large farmers were mentioned to Yalçın-Heckmann.

The large farmers have varied biographies. One example is Evez, age 50, a former sovkhoz director who became head of the sovkhoz liquidation committee in Tezekend before being elected mayor of one of the newly formed belediyeler in 1999. As of October 2002, he was cultivating privately, with two non-kin partners, 75 hectares belonging to 150 families. As rent, he gives each of them 200 kilograms of wheat per hectare. With his skills and connections from the former period, he could be considered one type of new elite or new rich. He has social and political capital stemming from his connections to those in authority; in the village it was said that he was chosen to become mayor with the help of the governor of the raion, although the two administrative bodies are supposed to have distinct structures. He is aware of these rumours and defends himself by pointing to the structural limitations of his position: he says people see only what he earns—that is, the amount of land he cultivates and the produce he collects from it. But no one asks, he claims, how much he has to pay those in ruling positions. He suggested to Yalçın-Heckmann that the governor of the district, wanting to build a stadium in the district town, had collected 'donations' by force from everyone whom he perceived as making money. This was a frequent corruption allegation, known and repeated by almost all the

[36] The father is a bookkeeper and nearly 70 years old; the mother is 63 and still works as a Russian teacher. The younger son is a vegetable trader in Moscow, and the elder son works in his father-in-law's tyre shop. None of them has any prior or direct experience in cultivation.

residents of the district. In short, Evez acknowledges that he is making money but differentiates his power connections from those of people in ruling positions. He stresses the inevitability of such connections and the existence of corruption as a system of redistributing profit, of which he admits to being a part.

A second example is the mayor of the other belediye in Tezekend, 35-year-old Mehman, who was formerly a driver in the sovkhoz. In September 2001 he was cultivating 40 hectares belonging to 60 families, at least 20 of whom were said to be kin. He was elected mayor not with the direct support of the raion governor but as a locally respected young entrepreneur.[37] He has been involved in trading produce to Russia since the 1990s and cooperates with his brothers and brother-in-law in taking tomatoes and other vegetables directly to Russia in container lorries. He has also expanded his activities to include agriculturally related small manufacturing by opening a production unit in a neighbouring village to make wooden cases for transporting fresh vegetables and fruit. Mehman certainly fits the image of the modern, enterprising capitalist farmer. He is not, in comparison with Evez, identified with the corruption of ruling bodies but is seen as an able, efficient, and hard-working, if ruthless, businessman, especially loyal to his own kin group. His partners are almost all kin.

These examples suggest that while kinship solidarity is a significant asset in managing property and accumulating wealth, links to powerholders are still central to starting and sustaining a farming business. These issues bear on debates concerning 'socialist legacy' versus 'capitalist insertion': it is the socialist legacy that is thought by national and international policy-makers to hinder the rural economy, whereas 'capitalist insertion' ideally portrays the enterprising and risk-taking individual and free-market economic behaviour. As Katherine Verdery (n.d.: 12) shows, both arguments have their place. While links to powerholders remain significant for rural entrepreneurship in Azerbaijan, the dislocation of agriculture in the postsocialist economy has caused a relative devaluation of the entire sector through land fragmentation and radical shifts of markets and production.

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[37] This statement is disputed. Some people suggest that Mehman 'paid' the raion governor to get elected. According to information Yalçın-Heckmann received in Moscow in July 2002, he was cultivating 150 hectares that summer, land he allegedly attained by claiming the *pay* of 50 additional households who were unable to cultivate their plots and lacked the means to pay the land tax. He was allegedly cultivating these shares for his own needs. He himself said that the belediye cultivated 40 hectares belonging to 70 families and gave 20% of the produce to the landowners. It should be remembered that in Tezekend, in contrast to the Ukrainian example, 150 hectares is a huge tract of land, especially considering that a family of five received 0.7 hectare after the land reform.

Comparison of the Case Studies

The privatisation of land in Ukraine and Azerbaijan took divergent paths and led to different consequences. New agricultural infrastructures have emerged that have given very different shapes to landownership and land usage in the two countries, and new tensions and inequalities have followed. Although the collective working of the land remains important in both cases, cooperation is manifested along different lines.

In the Ukrainian case, land entitlement was determined according to affiliation with the socialist workplace—the sovkhoz, the kolkhoz, or one of the social institutions perceived as supporting these agricultural institutions.[38] Most former sovkhoz and kolkhoz workers retained their land in the new cooperatives that evolved from the former Soviet institutions. Social sphere workers have created their own informal cooperatives as a means of working their plots. Only a small number of families have created private farms by renting land from former kolkhoz and sovkhoz workers, thus operating outside the sphere of influence of previous work organisations.

Land reform in Azerbaijan, in contrast, assigned a central role to the rural household. This emphasis has led to (partly unintended) regroupings among kin as they became the focus of both landownership and land usage. Intended or not, the new ways in which land is owned and worked in the Azerbaijani case necessitate the widening of social networks—kin and friendship ties. It has resulted in the prominence of household plot cultivation, which exists alongside some arrangements of kin groups who work together on privatised *pay* land. In addition, there is leasing of *pay* by several farmers, in much the same way as that seen in Ukraine. Most of the less fertile land lies fallow. In the Azerbaijani case, there are no cooperatives to work the land.

One can argue about whether the Ukrainian case displays a wider variety of forms of agricultural production because landowners there have the option of both formal and informal cooperative organisations not yet available to or practised by Azerbaijanis. It certainly establishes the Azerbaijani situation as different from the Ukrainian and Russian ones (as well as those in most of the rest of eastern Europe), in which the retention of cooperative enterprises in one form or another seems to be the norm. An equally important observation is that Ukraine presents an example in which the agricultural infrastructure of the past—technological and organisational—still

[38] See also Perrotta 2000: 168, where it is noted that 'landownership in Ukraine (as in other parts of the FSU) is firmly linked to labour'. Perrotta also reminds us that this connection between ownership and land is intimately linked to the central role of labour in the former Soviet Union, in both an ideological and a practical sense.

exerts some influence. In Azerbaijan, not only has the Soviet infrastructure been destroyed, but no other formal framework has replaced it. This has implications that warrant further discussion.

In looking at the ways in which land reforms have taken place in Ukraine, it should be emphasised that it is *previous* work institutions that have been given prominence in legislation and that form the basis of new agricultural relations. That is, land reform in Ukraine validates, in modified form, the infrastructure of the Soviet past. It takes into account past labour arrangements, which appear 'built into' the new laws, while trying to make space for new patterns. Land reform in this case has not involved the collapse of the previous infrastructure so much as its transformation. The new cooperatives operate in a way reminiscent of their predecessors, using the buildings and resources set up in the past. Even the leadership of the cooperatives—the positions of power and the individuals who occupy them—has remained largely intact. Yet under the canopy of the cooperative structure, other forms of agricultural production are emerging: informal groups of social sphere workers and individual farmers, although at least the former category could not function without the services of the cooperatives. And the cooperatives, when it is in their interest to do so, are also pushing forward with reforms.

Azerbaijan presents a different picture. Basing land reform on residential groups presupposes little of the collective infrastructure of the socialist past. Kinship presumably played as important a role in Azerbaijan then as it did in other socialist states, yet today its importance has significantly expanded. Any organisational structure that is now emerging is being developed by individual households, with little or no guidance from the top and with much trial and error. Kin and friends organise to cultivate their shares together. They learn by imitating successful neighbours and kin, and they exercise moral and other pressure on kin and friends who earn money abroad, urging them to finance production and consumption at home. With the collapse of the agricultural infrastructure once provided by the Soviet Union, Azerbaijanis have had little choice but to rely on existing kin and friendship networks and to develop new ones. In the final instance, the burden of agricultural production is placed squarely on these informal kin and friendship networks. Survival is aided by state pensions and remittances from household members abroad. Money lending and usury have become widespread. This has shifted the nature of kin and neighbourly relations. It is not simply that kin groups now have an additional reason to stick together and enlarge their economic relationships. Those kin who do not measure up to expected levels of support for fellow kin face criticism, while those who

are successful are judged on the basis of how well they provide effective help and support.

In both cases, the new infrastructures—one founded on previous work relations, the other on residential family ties—are rooted in structures already present in Soviet times, although the Azerbaijani case presents a more radical break with the past. What is emerging from these new infrastructural arrangements is a new way to engage in agricultural activities, which in turn provides the basis for new social inequalities and tensions.

In Ukraine, previous work affiliation has salience in local ideology: it is seen both as a levelling device and as the source of local tensions. Because affiliation to workplace legitimates entitlement to land, the *type* of work one did is a crucial marker of differentiation: agricultural workers in collectives were granted more land than those with professional careers, who were viewed as having provided support services to the workers. This has been a source of tension. Some social sphere workers, such as those formerly employed at the irrigation station, complain that their former work was not given due acknowledgement or worth. They expected to be given the same amount of land as those who worked in the kolkhoz and sovkhoz but instead received the much smaller plots to which other social sphere workers were entitled.

Villagers in Ukraine do not question the integrity of work as the principle of privatisation. Work is, to them, an equitable mechanism for land reform. Rather, their questions revolve around *definitions* of work. What type of work is more or less valuable in agricultural terms? Who did or did not engage in agricultural work? Often criticisms are aimed at people who apparently flouted the definitions. Was that person really affiliated with the collective at that time? Did he or she really work at the kolkhoz? Expressions of dissatisfaction heard in the village hinge on who really was or was not a worker. The inability to work together well, or 'pull together', provides a local explanation for the problems associated with the cooperatives and a means of understanding the fragmentation of the informal groups of social sphere workers. Those who pull together achieve success; those who do not work collectively or equally (the 'some work, some stand by and watch' syndrome) fail.

In the Azerbaijani case, new social inequalities are much the subject of public discussion, and collective institutions are sorely missed. The ancillary support provided by state and collective agricultural institutions, such as free or cheap electricity and water (now privatised), is seen as belonging to the golden past. 'In the past', people say, 'we all had jobs, water, and electricity, and the sovkhoz worker lived as well as the sovkhoz director'. Others complain, 'Now, if someone cannot pay his money, she or he will have to sit

in the dark or freeze in winter'. The new rich not only display their wealth through conspicuous consumption in the form of large, ostentatious villas but also build their own electricity and water supply lines. Successful producers are not openly envied so long as they are one's own kin, but successful kin are put under moral pressure to support their poorer relatives. In short, tensions are emerging along family lines as well as among friends and neighbours. Pressure to redistribute wealth comes from corrupt administrative authorities as well. Hence, those who are relatively well off in agricultural production use the strategy of blaming higher authorities for siphoning off their surpluses. The response to perceived corruption in the institutional spheres (corruption that itself may be carried out through kinship and other social networks) is to fall back on those one trusts—first and foremost, one's kin.

Despite these differences between the two cases, there are also some significant similarities. As is the situation throughout eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, here, too, reform policies geared towards encouraging individual private farming and increasing agricultural production have remained largely unrealised. While the neo-liberal policies adopted by the former Soviet countries, usually in accordance with World Bank or International Monetary Fund demands, are arguably as standardising as the former policies of a centralised state, they have also proved uniformly unsuccessful. The individual private farmer working his own land as a successful business remains largely an unfulfilled dream.

In the Ukraine case, the few successful private farmers are not only tolerated but even applauded locally (unlike the situation recorded for Russia; see, e.g., Hivon 1995, 1998). Nevertheless, the vast majority of villagers retain their faith in cooperative forms of agriculture, founded on previous work affiliations. Cooperative forms of work and solidarity with colleagues are perceived as vital in the successful working of the land. Through cooperative work, it is believed, one can attain success; without it, relations break down, resulting in economic and social isolation (as in the case of one of the new cooperatives in Nagorna). The same principle applies to individual, private farmers; their successes are viewed as well deserved because they are seen to work hard and to share their profits with others, whether by leasing land or serving the community more generally. 'Work' is seen as an asset to which everyone has access and through which anyone can succeed. It can be a levelling device, though its unequal application results in inequalities and bad feelings.

Even in the Azerbaijani case—an unusual example among the former socialist countries in having so thoroughly liquidated its kolkhozy and sovkhozy—an ethos and an ideology of cooperation among kin, neighbours, and

friends play a crucial role. The policy of allocating land on the basis of household residence reflects politicians' and policymakers' mistrust of the former socialist institutions, which in recent political history were afflicted by scandals and corruption. But it also gives scope for households to draw on relations of friendship and kinship in order to work the land. These relations extend even into other countries, primarily Russia, as people seek markets through informal kin networks.

While agricultural production could not occur in either case without cooperation in one form or another, it would be inaccurate to emphasise cooperation without also noting the existence of individual farming and its associated norms. This is more prominent in the Azerbaijani case, where the lack of agricultural infrastructure has left a pattern of tiny, fragmented parcels of land that are economically unprofitable on their own and where many households have no other means of production. Work is evaluated as a way for individuals and households to turn land into an economic resource, by cultivating it cleverly, using networks, investing intelligently, and securing access to other resources with the help of kin abroad. In the Ukraine case, successful private farmers represent the new spirit of enterprise that the government and local nongovernmental organisations are trying to foster. Yet farmers themselves admit that without the support of the government and the willingness of villagers to lease their land, they would be out of business. In both cases, A. V. Chayanov's emphasis on equilibrium between household composition and 'family demand and the drudgery of labour itself' helps explain the patterns of household production (Chayanov 1925: 5–7, cited in Kerblay 1971: 153). Ukrainian households do not cultivate household plots more intensively for sale in markets because it would mean small returns, given household size and distance to market. Even large private farmers are hesitant to acquire more land unless it comes in one block that can be easily worked. In the Azerbaijani case, without a reliable infrastructure and large investments of capital, the expansion of private farming is still more limited.

Through either work relations or kinship, community cooperation remains an important part of agricultural relations in both cases. Large-scale production in the Ukraine instance cannot be attributed simply to natural factors such as landscape or climate, although these do play a role. It is made possible through the maintenance of agricultural cooperatives. Although the Azerbaijani case has no formal institutions through which cooperation in agricultural work is structured, kinship and wider social networks informally provide new means of working the land. This has meant that previous large-scale production of cash crops such as cotton and grapes, which need capital and technological investments, has been largely discontinued. This has

enabled the expansion of labour-intensive crops, which put strain on households because of their labour demands but which at least provide a means of getting by.

Conclusion

The agrarian question appears as pertinent today as it was a century ago, if we understand it to mean the problematising of the peasantry in the context of some general political-economic framework—be it Marxist-Leninist or neo-liberal. Though it is too early to provide conclusive answers, especially for former republics of the Soviet Union, where land reforms have taken place later than in eastern Europe and have followed different paths, a comparison of Ukraine and Azerbaijan offers insights into the ways in which land reform is carried out and their impact on emerging rural social structures.

We have suggested that legislation which gives prominence to particular features—previous work affiliations or residential family ties—has significant consequences for the ways in which new landownership and land use relations are played out locally. In the Ukraine case, the emphasis on previous work affiliations has resulted in new agricultural relations and institutions that revolve around cooperative forms of work rooted in past Soviet institutions. The vast majority of villagers rely on the successors to these institutions for employment and economic assistance. Household production is more important for family survival than it was in Soviet times, but it is still fundamentally dependent on cooperative structures, and it is not nearly as prominent or autonomous as in the Azerbaijani case.

The 'retreat' to the household evident in Tezekend appears to fall more in line with the type of farming that reformers both anticipated and advocated. Following the collapse of the Soviet infrastructure, Azerbaijani households have been encouraged to resort to a more 'classic' peasant way of life, with the household as the traditional and central unit of production and consumption (Shanin 1971: 14–15). These 'peasants' are now also international traders who engage in market activities across newly established national boundaries, travelling thousands of kilometres from home in order to sell local agricultural products. Economic activities established during Soviet times, now developed through kinship, have left their mark in this local agricultural community, too.

The rising importance of kinship that accompanies a weakening state, which we have seen in Azerbaijan, is a phenomenon evident in other postsocialist states as well. In Bulgaria, for example, although cooperatives remain significant in agricultural production, the privatisation of land through restitution has given kinship new economic importance (Kaneff 1998). In Po-

land, which never collectivised its land, kinship has remained dominant throughout (Pine 1998, 2002). The cases discussed here show how informally organised social networks can take the place of the vanishing institutions of the socialist state. When the state provides an infrastructure that enables the continued cooperative working of the land, as in Ukraine, the local community will use it. When it does not, as in Azerbaijan, the response is a 'retreat' to the household.

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Chapter 9

Cooperation, Power, and Community Economy and Ideology in the Russian Countryside

Liesl L. Gambold Miller and Patrick Heady

Reforms in most parts of postsocialist eastern and central Europe have been intended to put land back into full private ownership. One of the aims of this programme has been to attain the improved efficiency that a regime based on private property and market transactions is believed to bring. Another motive has often been a belief in the rights of property as such. Often, attempts have been made to return the land to the heirs of those from whom it was expropriated. In these countries, once land has been returned, it is treated as fully private property of the new owners, who are free to sell it.

The motivation of the land reform introduced in Russia at the end of 1991 was different. True, its driving purpose was the intention to use market forces to increase the efficiency of Russian agriculture—but there was not the same attachment to the rights of private property owners as such. No attempt was made to return land to former owners, which in any case would have been difficult, because much Russian land had been communally owned even before collectivisation, and large private landowners had been expropriated long before, at the time of the 1917 revolution. More significantly, the country dwellers who were given title to land under the 1991 reform did not receive all the rights that go with private ownership in western and central Europe. In particular, they did not receive the right to sell their land. The desire to keep ownership within the local community and to protect country dwellers from unscrupulous land speculators took precedence over the rights of property owners to make their own unrestricted choices.

The hoped-for improvements in the efficiency of Russian agriculture have not materialised. Indeed, the total production of Russian agriculture has fallen dramatically. This fall has been concentrated among large-scale farms, the successor organisations of the former collective and state farms. Output from the small-scale family farms maintained by virtually every household in the Russian countryside has increased slightly. Legal provision was made

for people to set up larger-scale family farms on rented land, but this category of farmers—known in Russia as *fermery*—has never amounted to more than 2% or 3% of the labour force of Russian agriculture. The number of fermery has actually declined slightly since 1996, after special subsidies were discontinued (Stroev 2001).

An influential explanation of the poor performance of Russian agriculture has been that the reforms did not go far enough. This explanation inspired a new law, passed by the Duma in the summer of 2002, allowing the sale of all categories of land—effectively turning land into fully private property in the Western sense. At the time of writing, in November 2002, we probably have a couple of years to wait before we can obtain useful factual data on the impact of the 2002 law. But experiences with the first round of reforms should at least make us cautious about the proposition that all that is needed to resolve the problems of the Russian countryside is to implement market principles more thoroughly. In the meantime we, as anthropologists, can try to look more deeply at the way the reforms introduced so far have worked out on the ground. In order to do so, we need to describe the main reform measures. The following account is intended to be as simple as possible while allowing for the features that had major effects on practical developments (Perrotta 1998; Stroev 2001).

The postsocialist transformation of Russian agriculture was initiated by a government resolution dated 29 December 1991 that denationalised land and required agricultural enterprises (state and collective farms) to re-register under new legal forms delineated in the civil code. As the changes were implemented over the next few years, farmland became the property of the workers and former workers (but not future workers) of the farms, each of whom received a certificate entitling him or her to a certain amount of the land of the former farm, but not to a specific piece of land in a given location. These land shares could not be sold, but they could—after a certain amount of palaver—be transformed into specific plots that the owners could farm themselves as fermery. Alternatively, and far more commonly, the land share could be cultivated on the owner's behalf by a successor organisation to the former *kolkhoz*. As the owner always had the option (at least theoretically) of entrusting the land to an alternative organisation, the reform was intended to offer the new owners the possibility of choosing the form of organisation—and the specific managers—that offered the highest economic return on their land. At the same time, the prohibition on the outright sale of farmland left all former farm workers with a link to the land and prevented the concentration of ownership in the hands of a small elite.

Quite separately from this, people retained the rights to their household plots, and by the year 2000 these use rights were transformed into

outright ownership, complete with the right to buy and sell. In addition, tracts of land were allocated to local administrations for renting out, either in smallish amounts to ordinary households who wished to expand the production of their private plots or in much larger amounts to supplement the land shares of people who had decided to set up formally as commercial farmers (fermery).

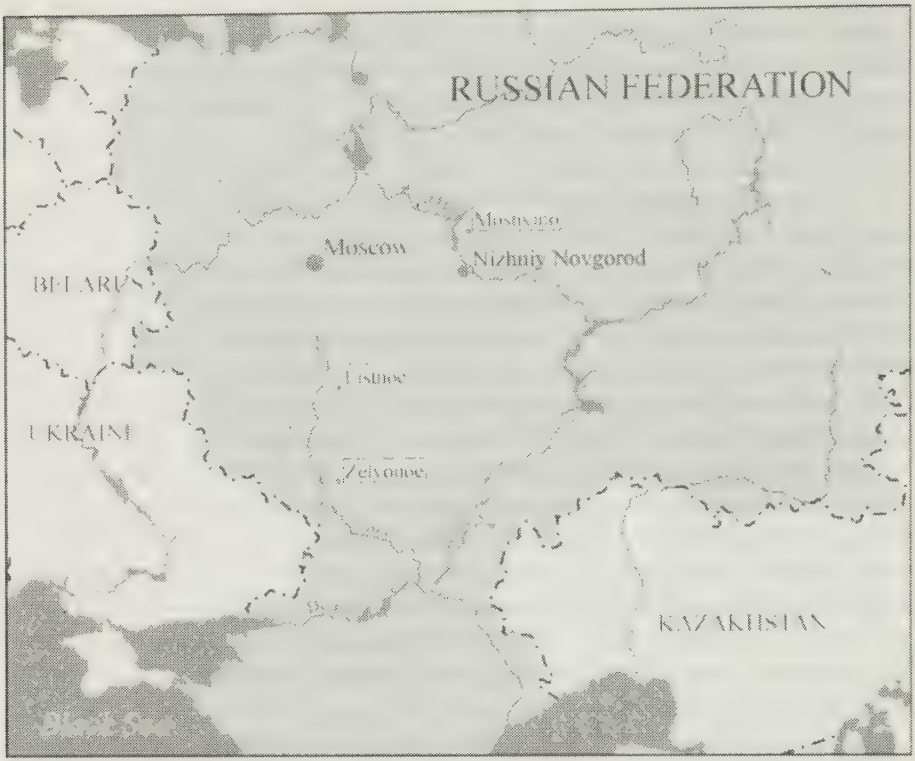
The other assets of the collective and state farms were treated differently. Again, the workers and former workers received shares entitling them to a part of the value of the farm's non-land assets. As with land, the physical assets (buildings and farm equipment such as tractors) could be left with the successor farm itself or distributed to those with shares—though once the equipment was acquired, it became fully private property. It is often said that those who were in the know took the opportunity to pick up more than their share of equipment. During the first few years of privatisation, fermery received credit on favourable terms to enable them to buy farm equipment.

Two final features of the reform process were intended to separate the commercial aspects of farming from the responsibilities of the state. The social welfare functions previously allocated to state and collective farms were formally transferred to the rural district administrations—though without, some say, the transfer of adequate financial means to fulfil them. Second, the state cut back drastically on financial subsidies to the farming sector.

Most collective and state farms opted to 'reorganise' as joint stock companies, allowing them to maintain their overall structure. This reorganisation entailed simply re-registering as a new company. A deadline of March 1993 had been set for the re-registering of all collective and state farms. By the end of 1992, about 80% of all farms in Russia had gone through this process (Van Atta 1993).

It is to now time introduce our three field sites—Moshkino, Listnoe, and Zelyonoe—and to say a little about their representativeness and the way we approached them.[1] Though these field sites are hundreds of kilometres apart and have some significant differences, they are all located in central European Russia and avoid the extremes of environment and of poverty versus prosperity that one would see in a comparison between, say, the depopulated communities of northern forest areas such as Pskov (Visser n.d.) and the flourishing agriculture of the Kuban steppe in the far south of European Russia (Nikulin 2002).

[1] The first of the three village names is genuine, but the second and third are pseudonyms.



The village of Moshkino is located 87 kilometres north-west of Nizhni Novgorod, in Nizhegorodskaya Oblast (see map). Geographically, it is in a transitional zone between the forests of northern Russia and the fertile black earth country of the south. Moshkino is one of 25 villages in the entire Kovriginski *selskoi raion.* The *raion,* the local authority above the rural district, contains 592 households and 1,333 residents. Moshkino has 54 households and a population of 165. Although the village itself is quite small, it is the largest of a cluster of 14 villages making up what is called the *kolkhoz raion,* which feeds into the Moshkinskoe collective farm. This raion identified with the new collective farm serves only as a symbolic boundary between the Moshkinskoe farm and the two other collectives in the area. The district administrative centre is in the village of Kovrigino, seven kilometres away, which houses the *sel'sovet,* or village council, and the only local school. The Moshkino population is predominantly over the age of 55. There were only three Moshkino students in the high school graduating class in

2002, and as of August 2002 the village had only one birth for the year but had suffered eight deaths. However, while Moshkino might experience some of the characteristic problems plaguing most of the smallest villages in Russia, it does have a relatively strong foundation in its historical connection to a strong collective farm.

Listnoe is a large village in Lipetsk Oblast, in the northern part of the fertile black earth region, about 450 kilometres south of Moscow. It is the centre of a rural administrative district whose population early in 2002 amounted to 4,202, of whom all but a few hundred lived in the main village, with the remainder distributed among four outlying settlements. This population is comparatively elderly—1,760 pensioners, but only 568 children aged 16 or under.

Zelyonoe is about 350 kilometres farther south, in Voronezh Oblast in the heart of the black earth zone. It is both a village and an administrative district, and its population in the summer of 2000 amounted to approximately 3,000 persons living in 1,500 households. As in the case of Moshkino and Listnoe, the population is rather elderly: about 40% of the inhabitants are over 60, whereas children and teenagers together amount to only 20% of the population. In 1999 there were 87 deaths in Zelyonoe and only 20 births.

The amount and kind of information we have about the three sites is variable. The best-studied site is Moshkino, where Liesl Gambold Miller worked for a year in 1997–98, followed by a five-week visit in the summer of 2002. Patrick Heady visited Zelyonoe for three weeks in the summer of 2000 and spent ten weeks in Listnoe during the early spring and autumn of 2002. The way we made contact with our field sites also differed and had some effect on the types of data we collected. Miller (LGM) started by making contact with the management of Moshkinskoe farm and used that as a base from which to contact the community as a whole. Heady (PH), on the other hand, visited each village as a guest of a private family and worked outward from there.

We present our findings in three main sections. First, we look at the impact of the reforms on collective farms, focusing particularly on worker-management relations. We go on to consider small-scale, household-based farming—the famous private plots that rural families retained throughout the communist period and that now provide half of all Russian agricultural production. The question we ask is whether it is right to think of these household-based farms as isolated units or whether they, too, need to be understood in the context of a web of collective relationships. Finally, we look at the cash nexus—the extent to which household production is sold on the market and the factors that hold most households back from engaging in *fermer*-style commercial farming.

In this chapter we want to get away from the general tone of lament surrounding the topic of Russian agriculture. Inevitably we find ourselves discussing why the reforms did not turn out as hoped, but we want at least to consider the possibility that there were good reasons for this, resulting from a positive attachment to other social institutions and values. At the same time, we present some evidence suggesting that the efficiency-promoting effects of the limited form of land privatisation introduced in the 1990s are starting to make a difference—implicitly querying the need for farther-reaching privatisation. Throughout the chapter we try to contextualise our findings by providing historical background and by noting differences as well as similarities among the three field sites. At the end, we review both the common findings and some of the intriguing new questions raised by the differences among the three sites.

Cooperation and Authority: Worker-Management Relations

Though their bureaucratic structure was all their own, in other ways the collective and state farms of Soviet Russia combined some features of two characteristic institutions of pre-revolutionary times. One was the noble serf-holding estate of central Russia, whose subjects were prevented from travelling and were obliged to provide unpaid labour to the landowner. This institution, which was set up much later than the feudal estates of western Europe, was steadily reinforced from about the sixteenth to the eighteenth century. The reason was the need of the increasingly powerful tsarist state for a mechanism with which to extract economic resources from the peasantry. Though the institution of serfdom was abolished in 1861, the need for surplus did not disappear, and for the next few decades (until the 1905 revolution) the surplus was collected directly by the state in the form of so-called redemption payments. The need to extract surplus from the peasantry re-appeared during the Russian civil war and became acute with the decision in the late 1920s to launch a crash programme of industrialisation and urbanisation. Collective farms were imposed at this stage in order to bring the farming population under state control and guarantee a supply of food to the newly growing towns. The key facts about collective farms were that their products were destined for the towns and that country dwellers were obliged to work on them and were again officially tied to the land. Although there was no line of institutional continuity with the noble estates, a similar state need had produced a similar solution.

The other institution was the peasant commune—the *mir* or *obschina*—an institution whose origins are obscure but which appears to have played a central role in Russian peasant life for several centuries. In this case there was institutional continuity, because the paradoxical truth is that, even

before so-called collectivisation, most land in central Russia was owned and partly managed by local peasant communities. Generally, each male family head was active in the *skhod,* or village assembly, which acted as the governing body. Village families had access to certain parcels of land held communally, but they also might own outright small areas of land never included in the collective holdings or previously purchased from the mir. Families also owned tools, livestock, and buildings. Meadows and forest land were almost always held in common. The collectively held agricultural land was managed by the skhod and partitioned out to peasant households in strips. Individual households often held between 30 and 50 strips of land, one in each cultivated field (Yaney 1971: 7).

Even during the days of serfdom, peasants had retained some land for themselves, control over which was vested in the mir. This situation was reinforced by the 1861 emancipation manifesto signed by Tsar Alexander II, which transformed the peasantry's 'juridical status, administrative structure, and fiscal relationship to the state' (Macey 2002: 3). Ownership of the land they used for themselves was formally transferred to the peasantry—but not to individual peasant households. Ownership was vested in the mir, which was also given responsibility for collecting the annual redemption payments (to pay for the land that had been transferred) and for preventing its members from evading their obligations by leaving the land. Although peasants were encouraged to leave the mir following the 1905 revolution (for reasons explained later), most remained within it, and following the 1917 revolution but before the Bolsheviks (the future Communist Party) extended their control to the countryside, most of the remainder rejoined the mir. The mir provided the administrative foundation for the subsequent communist committees of poor peasants, and hence the framework onto which the new collective farms were imposed (Dunn and Dunn 1988).

Collective institutions continued to develop during the Soviet period. During the 1950s and 1960s, there was a movement of amalgamation in the belief that larger farms would be more efficient, and state (as opposed to merely collective) farms were encouraged for the same reason. Collective farms, *kolkhozy,* were theoretically owned by their members, whose assembly was supposed to be the ultimate authority. But in practice, authority in both state and collective farms was imposed top-down by the state and party and modified in informal ways by the strategies of ordinary members (Fitzpatrick 1994; Humphrey 1998). Membership in the kolkhoz (as in the mir before it) was inherited, and although the children of state farm employees had to apply for employment once they were 16, this was hardly ever refused in practice.

Once Russia's programme of industrialisation and urbanisation had been successfully carried out, the emphasis of farm policy changed, and the former policy of exploitation was replaced by one of subsidies designed to bring living standards in the villages closer to those in the towns. This led to the comparative prosperity of the warmly remembered Brezhnev years and provided the memories against which the conditions that followed from the 1991 reforms are compared.

Moshkino

Moshkinskoe farm (or Moshkinskoe Joint Stock Company, to give its formal title) has an interesting history. Until 1994, Moshkino and most of the other 24 villages in its administrative raion were organised into a single collective farm. In March 1994, this collective, '60 Years October', underwent an auction at which most of its 3,109 hectares were divided among three newly reorganised farms—Mir, Kolos, and Moshkinoskoe—to which the inhabitants of the 25 villages 'entrusted' their land shares. Moshkinoskoe farm was organised as a joint stock company under the direction of Ekaterina Nikolaevna Makaricheva, who had worked on the former collective farm for 16 years in the capacities of accountant, economist, and eventual sub-chairman of the kolkhoz. At the reform auction, Moshkinoskoe received 1,477 hectares of land and thus became the largest of the three successor farms.

The land auction was highly publicised, with Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin in attendance along with administrative representatives from more than 30 regions of Russia. This was the third of five pilot farm auctions held in Nizhegorodskaya Oblast, which had become something of a pioneer in the privatisation process generally. The first privatisation in the country had taken place there in April 1992 with the International Finance Corporation–assisted privatisation of shops in the city of Nizhni Novgorod. The British Know How Fund, together with the World Bank and the International Finance Corporation, helped pay for and organise the privatisation of industry and the reorganisation of collective farming in the oblast.

Ekaterina Nikolaevna, the post-Soviet director of the Moshkinskoe farm, finds herself in the position of both enterprise director and social welfare provider.[2] This is precisely what the government was trying to avoid when it proclaimed the legal transfer of all social services from the kolkhoz to the local administration. Yet the managing of village social services continues to rest on Ekaterina. Neither she nor the villagers question her role as welfare provider. The relationship is clear, considering that all but one of

[2] After farm reorganisation, leaders are most often called 'director', as opposed to the Soviet-style 'chairman'.

the Moshkino households are linked directly to the Moshkinskoe farm in some way. These 53 households rely at least in part on Ekaterina and the parent farm for income, goods, or technical support.

The support provided by the farm is critical to the villagers' well-being, both economically and nutritionally. Although they are legally able and socially encouraged, at least by the government, to work independently of the collective, most find it impossible to sever ties completely. Access to low-cost domestic animals (cows and pigs), dividend payments of straw or hay, payments in kind of either meat, milk, or processed foods, and access to rental harvesters supplement the individual work everyone engages in on his or her personal garden. Ninety percent of the collective workers take one calf per year as part of their salary, and 6% take two. Every worker takes two pigs a year, and almost 40% take three pigs. Access to these animals as part of one's salary enhances the household's ability to survive without relying on more expensive purchases of food products at the market, not to mention providing families with an important way to earn money through meat sales. Though people actively pursue more individual attempts to make ends meet, they still rely heavily on their various ties to the parent farm.

Housing is one of the basic ways in which the people of Moshkino have been tied to the collective. One of the complaints of the Moshkinskoe management is that they can no longer afford to provide housing to lure workers to their farm. Houses do become empty, but the farm cannot afford to buy them, and thus houses turn into summer dachas for city relatives. In the past, the provision of housing by the collective was state supported. In Moshkino, homes were built, sometimes at a rate of two per year, and given to incoming workers with families or workers who would soon marry. Subsidised housing in the villages meant that each collective farm worker usually had his own home along with his own land. Occasionally, the farm would help provide the necessary materials, and a father might organise a work party to help build a house for his married son. Generally speaking, to become a state or collective farm worker meant that your housing would be provided either by your family, if they were local, or by the farm management. One accountant at Moshkinskoe said that she and her husband were still finishing their studies at the agricultural institute when the collective was building their house.

The main problem with this situation, if one's concern is for the overall functioning of the village, is that Ekaterina lacks the infrastructural support, previously provided by the Soviet state, to successfully meet everyone's needs. This does not stop her from trying, nor does it stop others from expecting her to help them. The main problem, if one is concerned with the successful transfer of collective operations to independent enterprises, is that

the local administrations have failed to manage these sectors. Equally puzzling, if one starts from the assumptions of much of economic theory, is that no entrepreneurs are filling these gaps. The situation, in fact, resembles a feudal system in which the persistent strands of mutual dependency and support intertwine with those of a vertical hierarchical structure (Humphrey 1991; Verdery 1996).

The expectation of provision rests in the memory of a supportive, paternalistic kolkhoz. Some of this can be attributed to the pan-human propensity for remembering systems in the past as functioning better than those of the present, and people as being nicer. Part of this nostalgia, however, has roots in Soviet propaganda and in citizens' lived experiences. This propaganda included detailed descriptions of the ideal Soviet citizen and standards for his or her behaviour. Found at all levels of education, from kindergarten to the kolkhoz, these official guidelines for thought and behaviour underlay nearly all forms of the arts and literature as well. As they were 'hammered into the brains of the Soviet people', these instructions became the moral template for all levels of activity, including agriculture.

Nadia, a 77-year-old Moshkino pensioner who had worked her entire life on the kolkhoz, said she missed everything about the Soviet Union, but her nostalgia centred on the care the collective provided. Sitting on a stump in her small personal garden, she explained, 'I don't have help anymore. The kolkhoz is really bad now. Earlier, when we worked for the kolkhoz, we received a bit of everything we grew. We tasted our work. They really helped us. We peasants were even able to make it through the war, thanks to the kolkhoz'. Nadia is a widow, and her 42-year-old nephew recently moved in to help her with household chores. He, too, worked on the collective but is now disabled by leg problems. She receives 1,093 rubles per month from her pension, or roughly US$30.[3]

Pensioners are not the only ones who reminisce about the state-sponsored support system of the collective village. Olga, the 43-year-old accountant for the Moshkinskoe farm, moved to the village in 1983 with her husband. They were drawn from the local town to the kolkhoz by the promise of social services and support, most prominently by the collective's standard practice of providing housing to its workers. She said, 'In 1983 when my husband started working here, they gave apartments or homes to people. That's how the kolkhoz worked. You don't just work here without getting something. The salaries were also good, plus we got the thirteenth

[3] In the summer of 2002, US$1 equaled 31 rubles.

salary.[4] All of these things make the situation today even worse, because we all remember'.

Most Moshkino residents feel that the former collective should not have been divided up. They considered themselves a strong collective and now wonder if they might have weathered the pressures of the last ten years better had they stayed together. Even the director of Mir, eventually the most successful of the three farms to come out of the separation of 60 Years October, complained, 'Dividing everything in the collective was a disaster! I don't know who had this stupid idea. [60 Years October] shouldn't have been divided. They should have analysed how our farm worked and they would have known that we were one of the strongest in the raion and also they would have seen that things wouldn't run well if we split'.

The strength of the former collective was a point of pride often invoked in the village. Because of the current troubles, many see reorganisation as having stripped them of their former glory and stability. Valya, a 61-year-old pensioner who still finds some paid work on the farm, said, 'It used to be a really good kolkhoz, Maxim Gorky, we were very strong.[5] My uncle used to be the head of the kolkhoz, and he was a good, strong leader. I thought we would have such a strong farm again. As it turned out, we aren't so great'.

All of the 32 Moshkino residents surveyed in 2002 said that the success of the farm rested primarily on the behaviour and abilities of its director. As Olga, the accountant, stressed, 'The director is everything to the success of the farm. They have to be a specialist and they have to have authority among the people'. The relationship between farm management and workers or residents has become strained in Moshkino, and in 2002 the rift seemed to have widened since earlier research in 1997–98. This may reflect the diminished state of the farm in general and the uncertainty with which people view their futures. Ekaterina no longer plants all of the land of the Moshkinskoe farm, leaving more than 500 hectares fallow. This is due to the decrease in workers, from 92 to 36, and in machinery over the past several years.

Workers seemed less optimistic about the prospects for profitable farming and more outspoken about perceived management problems with the director. Indeed, most of the workers on Moshkinskoe felt that the management style should be brought more closely in line with the ways of the

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[4] The thirteenth salary was paid as a bonus at the end of the year and was often an entire month's salary. Olga later said that with the profits from selling their own potatoes and slaughtering two pigs, plus her husband's thirteenth salary, they were able to buy a car.

[5] 'Maxim Gorky' was the collective in Moshkino until it was forcibly joined with two others in the 1980s, creating the 60 Years October collective.

former collective. Workers complained that the current director was not active enough in the management of the farm and did not check up on them enough. Gennady, a 42-year-old tractor driver, said that the director used to be more involved in the farm's activities: 'Earlier the director had a better attitude about work, and now she doesn't control things, she doesn't supervise. We need good discipline and a good director. We don't really have either now'.

Older people were angry that village youths did not want to work hard. They blamed this in part on the paucity of disciplinary measures taken by the director and her staff. However, this anger might also be related to the lack of connection people feel between their work efforts and their pay. One woman said, 'During the kolkhoz times, if you worked hard, you could really benefit. If the tractor driver didn't quit at six but stayed into the night, he would get paid much more. Now people just don't want to work. They don't see a reason to'. Galya, the *zootekh* (head of animals), was the only specialist on the Moshkinskoe staff who disciplined workers. She explained that because the milkmaids were paid according to how much milk they got, anything that interfered with their work was serious. For example, if they arrived to milk and the barn keeper had not removed the manure, the milkmaids could complain, and Galya would withhold part of the barn keeper's pay and redistribute it to the milkmaids.

Workers on Moshkinskoe contrasted Ekaterina's style with that of the management of Mir, the more successful neighbouring farm, where the director fined people for poor work habits and for drinking and also monitored the work in the fields twice a day. The director of this farm explained that he liked to keep things 'tightly organised'. Sitting behind a small table in the farm offices early one morning, he received a stream of villagers and workers, each wanting a work order signed or a complaint managed. He waved off two old men and made them sit along the wall nearby until he had dealt with all his 'official' business. The pensioner pair sat together, mumbling with the appearance of two sulking schoolboys. In an interview, the director explained that he ran things 'like a factory' and could not let everything fall apart. 'You have to hold things together if you are a good director', he said. One part of his management style is to pay bonuses to people who don't drink and fine those who do. 'They will think before they drink', he said.

One way in which Mir is able to draw labour away from other villages such as Moshkino is by providing housing. The director had just finished construction of an eight-unit apartment building, which took three years and more than two million rubles to complete. He obtained bank loans and some government subsidies to help finance the project. He admitted that being

able to build housing aided his management of the farm. 'I can fire people because we build houses. If I can offer housing, I don't have a problem finding workers from the area', he said. In the future, however, he plans to buy houses in neighbouring villages 'when grannies die', because it is cheaper and requires less bureaucratic paperwork than new construction.

When LGM asked Ekaterina about the Mir director's management style and told her that many people in Moshkino spoke favourably of him, she said, 'I think people respond better to help than to punishment. At Mir, people work not by themselves but because of his stick. Everyone chooses his methods. You can either be a good director or a good person. I've made my choice'. People's expressed preference for strong leadership is not only about economic success but crosses from the economic sphere of the farm into the social sphere of the village as a whole. The retraction of local socialist leadership and central planning left a gap that has not been filled by manageable legal options or growth in civil society. The result in Moshkino is nostalgia for strong village systems and leadership.

Zelyonoe and Listnoe

In Zelyonoe, too, the successor organisation to the former kolkhoz—still referred to as such despite the official change in organisational form—was experiencing economic difficulties and giving way to a more successful rival. Its leadership had changed several times, apparently without being able to arrest its steady decline. Like most such organisations, it paid no monetary dividends to the holders of land shares, and unlike some, it provided them with hardly any agricultural produce either.

The rival was a man named Nikitin who had started as a fermer in 1994. After successfully running and expanding his farm for a few years, he took a couple of decisive steps. First he wrote to all the pensioners who had land shares in the former kolkhoz, promising to pay them substantial dividends in the form of produce if they would withdraw their land shares from the kolkhoz and rent them to him instead. A large number of pensioners agreed to make the switch, enabling Nikitin to expand his operations dramatically. The next step was to make an agreement with the failing kolkhoz that he would hire its staff and rent its machinery and land while it was suing for bankruptcy. This was the situation during the summer of 2000. It meant that Nikitin was managing a commercial farming operation on a very large scale while no one else in the village was engaged in more than household-level cultivation.

In an interview, Nikitin explained that he considered incentive payments and worker discipline essential for the success of a commercial farm. His workers earned between 1,000 and 4,000 rubles a month, according to

their productivity. There were signs that Nikitin's local power extended beyond his own labour force. He agreed to give PH an interview if he went to meet him at the kolkhoz depot at 7:30 one morning. The depot turned out to be a large compound with a couple of buildings near the entrance, over which was some iron tracery with a red star attached. Thirty or forty men in dusty working clothes were waiting at the entrance. Inside the compound, about ten meters from the workers, was a group of six people in relatively smart clothes. At 7:35 Nikitin arrived in a large, rather battered car. He was a tall, burly man, and from the outset it was clear that he was the boss. His first priority was to send the workers off to do their tasks, consulting a couple of the smart people in the process. Only then did he turn to the other concerns of the smart people—who, it turned out, included the chairman of the kolkhoz and the administrative head of Zelyonoe rural district. It should be said that Nikitin was not a newcomer to power. Before he became a commercial farmer he had been a very senior forestry official, and he must therefore have had a good deal of insight into how to run a large organisation—as well as useful official contacts.

Nothing so dramatic had happened to the collective farms in Listnoe. In the early 1990s Listnoe contained two kolkhozy, whose members were drawn from the north and the south of the village, respectively, and three specialised collectives. One of these was a state pig farm, whose director, Vasilchikov, took advantage of the reforms to set up as a large-scale private pig farmer. Like Nikitin, he had a reputation as a strict disciplinarian, but he had not pursued such a dramatically expansionary career. The state pig farm remained in existence and merged with the northern kolkhoz to form an organisation that was still eligible to receive state subsidies. Although both former kolkhozy have had cash flow problems, the subsidies received by the northern farm have enabled it to pay a higher proportion of its workers' wages in the form of cash. The proportion that it paid in kind during the time PH was there came in the form of sugar and grain. The grain was actually welcome to the family with whom PH was staying. The amount had been worked out at a cheap price, and so they received more grain to feed to their livestock than they would have been able to buy with the monetary equivalent. Even so, the northern kolkhoz did not actually yield a profit to its shareholders. The most recent annual dividend had consisted of an option to buy some of the farm's grain output at a price close to that prevailing in the market.

As in Moshkino, people in both Listnoe and Zelyonoe refer nostalgically to the days in which collective enterprises functioned better. But the tone seems more practical and less a question of personal identification with the success of a strong kolkhoz. Thus a common complaint in Listnoe is that,

before perestroika, the cash wages of collective farm workers used to be enough to meet their families' purchasing needs, but now those needs can be met only by selling produce from the domestic farm. If collective farms had been an important focus of identity, one would have expected a sense of rivalry between Listnoe's northern and southern kolkhozy. Middle-aged and elderly inhabitants of Listnoe do warmly recall a former sense of rivalry between the northern and southern parts of the village, but not in terms of the collective farms. The people of the two halves of the village were known as *yurini* and *pokrovtsi,* after the village's two former churches, dedicated respectively to saint Yuri (George) and the Virgin's protective veil (*pokrov*). Their sense of identity was (and to a lesser extent still is) demonstrated in elaborate célebrations to mark the two sacred days. Just as tellingly, during his entire stay in Listnoe, PH heard no complaints about weak kolkhoz leadership.

Cooperation and Community: Mutual Aid in the Household-Level Economy

In Russia, the land worked by individual households has always been enormously productive. The substantial contribution of *lichnoe podsobnoe khoziaistvo,* or 'subsidiary household farming', is well documented (Medvedev 1987: 363; Van Atta, ed., 1993). Subsidiary farms, often referred to in the literature as 'private plots', produced up to 30% of the total annual gross agricultural product in the former Soviet Union, much more than their share of the total land (Lerman et al. 1994: 527; Nechemias 1990: 165).[6] A study in the fall of 1997 stressed the continued importance of subsidiary farming for peasant households (International Finance Corporation 1998). In both non-reorganised and reorganised farms, workers' families relied on their household plots for a large part of their income—48.0% and 43.5% on the two kinds of farms, respectively.[7] Today these figures are rising. It was estimated that in 1998, personal plots amounted to 5% of the total agricultural land in use but accounted for at least half of the total agricultural production of the country (Amelina 2000). In our field sites, household plots provide the basic sustenance, both nutritionally and economically, for most village households.

A short linguistic digression may be helpful at this point. The Russian word *khosiaistvo* carries a wide range of meaning, from household and farm to the process of production. In Listnoe there are about 1,800 *khoziaistva,* or households. The village of Moshkino has only 54 households. Each of these

[6] Products included vegetables, meat, milk, potatoes, wool, and eggs.

[7] 'Income' was defined as cash earned by any of the members of a household.

households has about 40 *sotok* (0.4 hectare) of its own land, including the land on which its house stands, facing onto the street. Behind or built onto the side of the house are animal stalls and storage sheds. We refer to these buildings and land as the 'household farm'. Typically, the house and buildings might take up to about 5 sotok, and behind them a roughly equal amount of space is left for a *sad* containing fruit trees. The remaining 30 or so sotok form a strip stretching out behind the house towards the backs of the houses in the next street. (In Moshkino, where there are only a few streets, these strips can also be found alongside a nearby field or up against the forest, depending on the location of the house.) This is known as the *ogorod,* or vegetable garden. In Listnoe it is overwhelmingly dedicated to potatoes, many of them destined for sale. In addition, relatively small parts of the *sad* and *ogorod* are dedicated to other vegetables, such as tomatoes, cucumbers, cabbages, carrots, and melons, destined for the family's own consumption. In Listnoe the public authorities, both village administration and kolkhoz, also rent out additional land for use as parts of household farms. We refer to the activities associated with the household farm as 'household farming'. It should be distinguished from *fermerskoe khosiaistvo,* or 'fermer-type farming', which typically involves far more land and equipment and requires the enterprise to be legally registered in a different way.

Academic and political views of household agriculture have varied. Some observers, focusing on households' continued use of traditional forms of cultivation and animal rearing, have seen the household sector as the only remnant of the pre-collectivised system (Humphrey 1998: 9). Others, including Gorbachev, have thought that 'peasant household farms ... remain the most likely base for future development of private agricultural production' (Lerman et al. 1994: 531). It has also been argued that personal satisfaction could be increased among villagers if the role of subsidiary household plots was expanded (Miller 2002). There is of course no necessary contradiction between these views, and in this section we draw on all of these perspectives in analysing the practice of household agriculture.

How far can household farming be identified as a form of private, as opposed to collective, enterprise? The identification is often made, in both Western and Russian publications, but it needs to be looked at carefully. This point would apply, to some extent, to farming families anywhere. Even in western Europe, the logic of the market has to come to terms with an organisation of farming enterprises based on inherited kinship ties (de Haan 1994). There is also a danger of reading 'Western' notions of private property and individual enterprise into a cultural context that is actually quite different. The Russian peasant household has always been to some degree dependent on mutual aid and cooperation. In pre-revolutionary times the

extended family household played an important economic role, and beyond that there was the organisation of the mir, which we have already discussed. Despite the prominence of the peasant commune, village life was never completely collectivist (Kingston-Mann 1991: 35). Individual, community, household, and commune interests were always intertwined. This intertwining continued in Soviet times, though the rhetoric was clearly collectivist. Nevertheless, private plots of varying sizes were permitted during all of the Soviet period and were always the main basis of family nutritional subsistence. During this time, mutual aid between kin continued to flourish (Dunn and Dunn 1988). How is this picture reflected in the present and recent past of the communities described in this chapter?

In Listnoe, the land on which cattle graze belongs to one of the collective farms but is treated as waste ground, and no charge is made for its use. The kolkhoz also rents out, at a fairly moderate charge, portions of meadow land on which households can make hay for winter fodder. The village administration has a stock of arable land that it rents out cheaply on short leases—three to five years—to households who request it and who, in the view of the administration, will use it effectively for agricultural production. In 2002 there were 250 of these rental agreements in operation, so that about one in every seven households had rented extra land. Though the amounts were small in absolute terms (around a hectare, in the cases of families PH spoke to), it should be remembered that renting a hectare would effectively triple a household's stock of arable land. This differs significantly from the situation in Moshkino, where none of the residents was renting additional land. They all said they could not handle working any more land.

What happens when we move from questions of ownership to questions of work organisation? In Listnoe, picking potatoes is usually a cooperative affair. This is how one woman described the work: 'We help each other. Everyone digs. People don't like to go into the field alone. We dug and picked [the potatoes in one strip]; now we are picking in the next strip. This is how it goes with us in the countryside'. The sentiment sounds collectivist, and this impression would have been reinforced by the size of her work group—19 people in all. However, this group was not organised by a collective farm. In fact, it centred on two married sisters and was made up of their own and their husbands' relatives (altogether a group of 12 kin) and seven friends and neighbours. First they picked the potatoes from a strip of land belonging to one of the sisters, and then they moved on to pick potatoes from the other sister's land—each strip being about 0.3 hectare. The field was ploughed by a tractor belonging to the husband of one of the sisters. Except for a little bit of tidying up, the whole operation took less than a morning. The woman just quoted began her account by saying, of one of the sisters,

'She is my niece. She picked [potatoes] on my land, and now I am picking [potatoes] on hers'. Interviewing one of the sisters afterwards, PH asked if they had paid any of the potato pickers. She said no, that it was simply a question of helping each other. They did, however, provide a special lunch for the potato-picking team.

The only unusual thing about this group was its size. PH obtained details of the composition of 24 potato-picking teams. The median size was eight people. In all cases except one, most members of the team had kin ties to the owner of the land being harvested. In many cases PH was able to ask about payment, and he was always assured that no cash payment was ever made to members of the work group. The only time cash payments were made was when no one in the group owned a horse or a tractor. In that case the owner of the land would pay for someone to do the ploughing, but this person was not seen as part of the group. The picking usually ended with a particularly tasty meal or picnic, often accompanied by glasses of *samogon* (home-brewed vodka). PH helped some of the teams, and it is worth mentioning that, despite the absence of payment and the celebration at the end, during the picking itself people always worked very hard—with only the occasional short pause to drink some water, smoke, and recover their breath.

The absence of cash payment does not mean the absence of any recompense. In general, people observed the principle of *pomoshch za pomoshch*—returning help for help. In two cases in which people had come from a local town to help pick potatoes for an elderly parent, PH was told that they received some of the potatoes in return for their efforts. But despite the strong tendency towards some degree of reciprocity, this should not be viewed as simply a system of non-monetary payment. People gave equal stress to the idea that they were helping each other—being in a moral relationship in which each was ready to help the other when needed. In this context, strict balance is unnecessary, at least in the short term. Another principle that people sometimes cited was that one should help *svoi lyudi,* 'one's own people', by which they meant one's relatives. The importance of this principle is borne out by the composition of the work teams, the great majority of whose members were kin or affines.

In Moshkino, such large labour parties are uncommon. Kin do help one another when possible in harvesting, caring for animals if someone is ill, and occasionally loaning money. But an interesting feature of personal harvests was the addition of assistance by friends from town. These friends would be hosted in a sort of 'working holiday'. They were put up in the home and fed special foods; they enjoyed the *banya* (steam bath), swam in the river, and indulged in other benefits of village life in exchange for helping with the potato harvest for a few days. Some villagers joked that they

should go into the tourism business, offering a home stay and 'potato picking on a real Soviet collective!' Though inconclusive, the data suggest that the lack of a predominantly kin-based network of labour support could be a result of the fact that a significant portion of the population originated in other areas. Among 23 households surveyed in 2002, only 6 of 47 adults had been born and raised in Moshkino.[8] Thus, there might be fewer kin or affinal ties locally.

Another important kind of labour exchange is based not on kinship but on neighbourhood. In one part of Listnoe, there is a herding rota involving the minority of households who own cattle. Most of these families own just one or two cows, but the total size of the herd is about 50 or 60. Each day two men—one each from two of the households involved in the rota—take the cattle out onto the grazing land at dawn and bring them back at sunset. The next day this duty is fulfilled by men from the next two households in the rota, and so on. The role of herdsmen thus circles through the streets involved in the arrangement. The arrangement stops during the winter, and when it resumes in the spring, the first herdsmen are the next two in line after those who last took the herd out in the autumn.

In Moshkino, neighbours are extremely important for labour and the household economy. All of the 23 households surveyed said that their neighbours were very helpful and 'good people'. Villagers usually buy their domestic animals from Ekaterina Nikolaevna at relatively low prices. They buy a pig or a calf, keep it until it is about eight months old, and then slaughter it. After putting away as much meat for themselves as they can, they often sell the surplus to their neighbours. They rarely sell the meat in town because they can usually find a neighbour to buy it. In 1997–98 it seemed that there was a sort of rotating meat market among villagers. One household would buy and slaughter a pig, selling the surplus to her neighbours, and in the next six months another neighbour would make a purchase and reciprocate by selling the meat back to the first neighbour. This enabled residents to share the monetary and labour costs of acquiring and raising livestock. These reciprocal relationships were not bound by kinship but were based more on good neighbourliness and the maintenance of community ties. Indeed, in Moshkino there are no clusters of kin living near one another. Although kin do help one another, this seems to occur no more often than neighbours aiding one another.

Nevertheless, kin-based relationships are useful in Moshkino and can help a household complete work more quickly. If you ask a close relative with access to a harvester to help you in your field, he will probably come to

[8] The 23 households contained 65 people in all, 18 of them under the age of 18 and not counted as adults.

you before doing other people's work. If you are kin, you are 'obliged to help one another', whereas if you are neighbours, normally you would not refuse a request for aid, but you are not obligated in the same way. Neighbours are still categorically close to kin, and villagers maintain that you would not ask neighbours to pay you for helping them.[9]

Thus, household farming involves the households who practice it in interactions with kin, neighbours, and kolkhoz and village authorities. Now, as in the past, the practice of 'private' family farming in our villages is embedded in collective relationships. But how important is the collective context? How much do the elements of collective organisation contribute to the efficient use of resources and to the well-being of individuals and families?

The question is relatively easy to answer in the case of the additional land rented out by Listnoe's village administration and the kolkhoz. Because it is rented on short leases, the distribution of use rights in land can be fairly rapidly adjusted to changes in family circumstances. If land were in short supply, this would be an efficient way of matching land and labour resources and thus—other things being equal—of maximising output while ensuring a fairly equal distribution of the per capita product. (Though land may not be in short supply overall, most of it is still allocated to the kolkhozy and other large organisations, and so the amount available for household farming is fairly limited.) The same principle applies in this case as in that of the distribution and redistribution of land in the pre-revolutionary peasant communes. Now, as a century ago, there is a need for more research to see whether the extra land farmed by some households really functions to even out per capita resources over the household's life cycle—as argued then by Chayanov—or whether in fact more land is being allocated to an emerging stratum of more prosperous farmers, as Lenin once claimed (Shanin 1972: 59, 102–9).

The benefits of adopting the cattle-herding rota are obvious: it is a straightforward case of economies of scale. If each family had to herd its own cattle, the drain on labour resources would be huge. Since two men can control 50 cattle or more, taking turns makes it possible to minimise the drain on manpower and provides the same savings in labour time to each of the participating households.

The benefits are much less clear-cut in the case of potato picking. A simple way to measure the practical advantages of joint potato picking is to compare what happens when potatoes are picked on a group basis with the results obtained when families work alone. This does sometimes happen,

[9] The only entrepreneur in the village, Tatiana, has asked neighbours and pensioners to pay her husband, in cash or in reciprocal labour, for his help in harvesting their land—something that many saw necessary to bring to my attention.

because some families—particularly those of public employees who have moved to the village to take up their posts—do not have a network of local relatives to call on for help. PH asked one such family how they had managed their potato harvest. The answer was that they had hired a tractor driver to plough the potatoes out of the land, and then they—a middle-aged husband and wife and their 20-year-old daughter—had gathered the potatoes themselves. It took them two days, a good deal longer than if they had been helped by relatives or neighbours, but they incurred no corresponding obligation to turn out and help other people with their harvests. If the only thing at stake is the effort needed to gather in the potato harvest, then it is not clear that group action offers dramatic advantages.

In order to see why potato picking is such an occasion for collective activity, it makes sense to place it in the context of other aspects of the household farming enterprise that either do or do not involve mutual assistance. The first thing to note is that despite the importance of collective action, most farmwork is actually done by the families themselves. This goes for all work involved in raising pigs and poultry, as well as for care of cattle when they are in the stalls. Not even potato growing is systematically the object of inter-household cooperation: most tasks involve members of the household working alone—when weeding, applying insecticide, or scything the potato plants immediately before the harvest—or hiring the owner of a horse or tractor to work with them in preparing the ground, sowing, and earthing up the growing plants.

As for circumstances that do call for inter-household aid, two apt examples impinged on the Listnoe family with whom PH stayed. In the early spring their cow fell ill and stopped producing milk. A relative and a neighbour regularly dropped by with large, multi-litre jars of milk from their own cows. PH's hostess said she would have done the same for them had the circumstances been reversed. The second example concerned this woman's nephew, Nikolai, who during the spring and summer was building an extension to his house, increasing its size by at least 50%. In order to do this he hired three specialist building workers but also drew on a network of no fewer than eight of his own kin, each of whom gave up several days to help with the work, unpaid. Among these was his mother's brother, who was himself a specialist building worker and who, had he not been a relative, would have expected to be paid. There was an element of reciprocity here: Nikolai helped his relatives out in various ways, including ploughing their fields gratis with his horse, and was particularly assiduous in helping his mother's brother. But all the same, there seemed to be no exact balancing of the monetary value of help offered and returned. Perhaps the essential point was that Nikolai was involved in a major enterprise, involving the use of

expensive resources, and everyone concerned recognised the need to help him complete it as quickly as reasonably possible.

Bringing the lessons of these two examples together, we begin to see why potato picking should be such a marked occasion for collective action. It does involve the deployment of expensive resources, in the form of a horse and plough or of a tractor pulling a specialised potato excavator. Bringing together a large force of potato pickers ensures that the job is done quickly and minimises the opportunity for rain, animals, or theft to reduce the yield of excavated but ungathered potatoes. Though these advantages may not be crucial (as shown by the example of the family without local relatives), they are not entirely negligible—and it is pleasant to feel that one has got a heavy task done quickly. It is an occasion when help is welcomed and thus an opportunity to put into practice the oft-repeated assertion, *pomogaem drug-druga*—'we help each other'. At the same time, help that would be welcome even between families in the prime of life becomes an opportunity for meeting real need when younger relatives help their elderly parents to gather in the harvest.

In Moshkino, the collective itself was still the site for regular displays and celebrations of collective value. There were many causes for mid-afternoon parties, including the one-year anniversary of someone's wedding, one of the milkmaids placing eighth in a regional milking contest, a visit by a committee from the raion central administration to check the crops, or any day preceding a state holiday. At these times, the farm workers gathered to drink, eat, and relax for a few minutes. What was striking was the genuine closeness displayed by many of the people. One could not help feeling they were 'one big family'. The workers themselves often describe the collective as a family and contrast it with other collectives where things might have changed. Consistent with this—but rather ironic, given the predominant feeling that the director should be stronger and more authoritarian—some Moshkinskoe workers say that the collective Mir is run like a business, whereas 'our collective is based more on friendship'.

The celebratory meal or picnic that concludes each family's potato picking makes it clear that potato picking is not just an application of the principle of *vsaimo-pomoshch,* or mutual aid. It is also a celebration of a collective value that, as we have seen, provides insurance against minor mishaps such as a sick cow, a basis for assembling a labour force for occasional exceptional tasks such as extending the family dwelling, and an unobtrusive mechanism for inter-generational transfers of labour and food. It also provides those involved with the satisfying sense that, in helping each other, they are doing the right thing. If we extend the concept of household farming to cover all the activities, other than regular employment, involved in main-

taining and reproducing the community of village households, it is clear that mutual aid is not an incidental addition to an economy of independent household enterprises. Even if some of its manifestations are only marginally useful, the ethos of mutual aid is nevertheless an important part of the household farming approach to social and physical survival.

Commerce and the Cash Nexus

The current attempt to promote private property and market-oriented farming in Russia has a precedent. In 1906, a year after violent peasant uprisings and revolutionary movements shook the country, the tsar appointed Peter Stolypin prime minister. Later that year, Russian agriculture underwent reforms implemented by Stolypin, who was convinced that the peasants should be turned into small proprietors. He believed that if the peasant were the boss of his own land, his economic position would be improved and he would become loyal to the government.

The results of this voluntary reform, called at the time the 'second emancipation', were startling (Atkinson 1983: 41). Some peasant households moved quickly to obtain title and later combined their land strips. By 1917, one-tenth of all farmers had obtained title and combined their land strips, thus becoming independent farmers. In the view of some scholars, the programme succeeded because it was compatible with one of the most deep-seated aspirations of the Russian peasantry, the desire to own and manage their own land (Macey 2002). Others would argue that the fact that only a minority privatised their land—and were forced by their neighbours to return it to the mir at the time of the 1917 revolution—better reflects the attitudes of most peasants (Figes 1996: 232–41).

It should not be thought, however, that membership in the mir excluded either participation in the market or the differential accumulation of wealth in the form of livestock, equipment (even mills), and, to some extent, additional land outside the jurisdiction of the mir (Dunn and Dunn 1988). There were some rich peasants—kulaks—both in tsarist times and during the 1920s. History provides no evidence that Russian peasants ever shunned the cash nexus completely, but neither does it show that many ever aspired to become independent commercial farmers.

Household farming should not be identified exclusively with subsistence production. Although some households may use the produce of their household farms entirely for their own subsistence, it was common practice in Soviet times to sell some of it. In Listnoe, sales of household farm products have increased in the last decade or so—and by local standards, the cash income can be considerable. It would not be unusual for a family's income from sales of potatoes and animal products to reach 30,000 rubles a year,

comparable to the annual salary of an accountant or a schoolteacher. It should be remembered that this cash income comes as an extra, after the family has put aside a portion of the product for its own subsistence needs.

In Moshkino, although most villagers do sell a portion of their personal produce, it is significantly less than in Listnoe. An ambitious seller, such as one pensioner who sells milk several times a week in the market ten kilometres away, often earns only 15,000 rubles a year. This is significant, however, given that her pension amounts to 13,200 rubles a year. She can effectively double her cash income by selling milk. Most Moshkino residents, however, sell little of their own produce. They consume most of it themselves and pickle countless jars of vegetables to get them through the winter months. Some regularly sell excess meat after they slaughter one of their domestic animals, whereas others routinely give that meat to relatives in town.

Meat and milk still make up the largest proportion of personal produce sold by Moshkino residents. Potatoes were, as of 2002, kept almost exclusively for household use. This marked a change since 1997–98, when most households sold surplus potatoes. This can be linked to the fact that the Moshkinskoe farm has drastically cut back its own potato production in order to focus on the more profitable production of milk. Villagers who used to receive potatoes from the parent farm can no longer rely on this form of in-kind payment. In addition, a dozen or so pensioners formerly worked in the early winter months sorting potatoes to earn extra cash, and they have now lost that source of income.

The apparent willingness to market household farm products on a substantial scale raises the question of why rural inhabitants are not taking the further step of separating their land from the collective and working as independent fermery, as many reform consultants had both predicted and hoped for. Which rural Russians have taken the step to fermer-style commercial production, and what influenced their decision?

Enterprise by Members of the Elite

In spite of the hardships faced by Ekaterina in Moshkino and other directors like her, she is decidedly pro-reform. If she did not feel the 'heavy burden of responsibility' toward local residents, she would strike out on her own, confident that she could have a successful (fermer-style) family farm. Ekaterina agrees with many villagers who argue that until there is stable political leadership and genuine pro-rural legislation, their economic situation is likely to remain in flux. Ekaterina has a distinct advantage, however, as a well-educated and relatively successful woman. She cannot claim to share the same economic or social malaise as most of the villagers, or their

nostalgia for the Soviet collectives of the past. She is, after all, the new farm director.

In a farm management survey conducted in Nizhegorodskaya Oblast in 1995, 'only three of the forty-two managers interviewed expressed that they are ready to go back to the former system' (Garadzha 1996: 3). This should not be remarkable considering that managers are generally better equipped, emotionally and economically, to handle the struggles of the current changes. These are individuals who emerged as leaders ready for the challenges and responsibilities of steering a farm into a new century. For example, the former head of the sel'sovet in the Moshkino area is now the head of a machine tractor station (MTS) enterprise.[10] His connections through his former position have made his business a thriving one. Most of the farmers in the region hire him and his small crew to spread mineral and chemical fertilisers and manure onto their fields. Several people in Moshkino confirmed that his connections made his current work possible. Villagers also say that Ekaterina will be able to keep Moshkino going 'as long as she has connections and can make deals'. Similarly, the director of the flourishing farm Mir is a former safety inspector and chairman on a collective farm, and he maintains many of those ties. As shown by the examples of Nikitin in Zelyonoe and Vasilchikov in Listnoe, the experience, education, and contacts of many managers put them in the enviable position of being able either to find administrative or managerial work or to take up the role of fermer with a fair chance of success. For most villagers, the options are much more restricted.

Enterprise by Non-Elite Families in Moshkino

Only two villagers in Moshkino, Pasha and Tatiana, have attempted to farm independently. Tatiana was born in a neighbouring village, attended the agricultural institute in Nizhni Novgorod, and has lived in Moshkino all her adult life. She is 41 years old, and her husband is 44. They have two children, a married daughter who will graduate from the agricultural institute and lives in the town nearby and a son who recently entered the technical college in Nizhni Novgorod and spends his weekends and school breaks at

[10] Machine tractor stations (MTS) were viewed as the third significant element of socialisation in the countryside, after state and collective farms (Conquest 1986: 181). They were enormous, ineffective storehouses for agricultural machinery of all types, and each one served several collective farms. They were responsible for collecting the compulsory grain deliveries to the state, but in Stalin's time they eventually became the rural political headquarters of the Communist Party. Khrushchev began disbanding the MTS system in the 1950s, forcing local collectives to purchase the equipment at set prices, whether they wanted it or not.

home working with his parents. When the collective was being reorganised in 1994, Tatiana and her tractor driver husband decided to stay with Ekaterina and work on the Moshkinskoe farm. Tatiana had been an agronomist in the 60 Years October collective, and under Ekaterina she became the chief agronomist. After a year she realised that 'it didn't matter what form of collective farm it was, it was still a collective organisation and you don't really work for yourself'. She decided to leave the farm and strike out on her own with her husband. They have 30 hectares, of which approximately 18 hectares are devoted to cereals and 12 to fodder crops, and their home garden is used for vegetables.

Understanding Tatiana's situation makes two things clear. First, the path from collective to private farming is so riddled with uncertainty and problems that it comes as no surprise that villagers are hesitant to attempt the change. Second, Tatiana is one of the more resourceful and persistent people in the village and would probably have succeeded no matter what her circumstances were. In 1997 she described her foray into the world of the new Russian fermer:

> During the first year I just asked the Agricultural Chemicals Organisation in Gorodets and they loaned us a tractor for the spring to enable us to seed the plants. But there was a condition for me. I agreed to buy them a tiller. So I had to get a loan, and I bought the equipment for ploughing and harvesting potatoes—a double potato digger actually. So we had to buy this equipment, and then they gave us the tractor, but we had to pay them for using the tractor, and since I had two calves and two cows at home we had to kill them and sell the meat in order to pay for renting the tractor. And then we had to pay back our loan [for purchasing the tiller] at 50 percent interest per year! Can you imagine?

By 1998 she had decided to take loans to establish herself as a pig farmer. She felt that the work would be easier because she could do it all herself, without relying on others.

Tatiana's house is right behind the club and near the centre of the village. In 2002, the appearance of the house had undergone a few changes, both internal and external. The most striking was that there was barbed wire wrapped around the waist-high front fence. Once inside, signs of Tatiana's relative success were clear. The family had a new television and VCR mounted in the upper corner of the living room, a bread machine, a new washing machine, and new furniture. When she closed the front door, she put a large bare tree branch in front of it to secure it from the inside.

Tatiana was still farming independently in 2002 but had given up the pig farm. She said it was unprofitable under current conditions, and she had turned to farming more potatoes and vegetables. She now owns all the equipment necessary for planting and harvesting potatoes and has managed to pay off her loans. She sells 90% of her vegetable harvest, and the family uses 10%. All of their animals are used for their own consumption. In the winter, Tatiana works as an 'entrepreneur'. She and her husband drive to Nizhni Novgorod and buy products wholesale to sell later in the villages. They set up a tent in front of the Moshkino store, where they sell their grains, vegetables, and other goods. Tatiana estimated that together they earn 60,000 rubles a year, or roughly one-third more than the average household income of 40,000 rubles a year.

For our arguments here, Tatiana's case has three main points of importance. First, her answers to questions about authority fell well outside the standard responses most villagers gave. This was reflected in her dissatisfaction with the reorganised farm and her feeling that she was still not working for herself. Second, she was an anomaly when it came to matters of cooperation. Despite having both a sister and a mother in a neighbouring village, Tatiana did not help them. They had experienced a falling out a few years earlier, and she has visited her mother only once since then. She and her husband do help neighbours who ask them to assist in planting or harvesting. However, they charge the neighbours for this work or 'get them to help us prepare the potatoes to be seeded and then to harvest them'. She could not specify a cost for the couple's work, but it is clear that they would not help free of charge. Indeed, Tatiana could not say that she and her husband helped anyone on the *pomoshch za pomoshch,* or returning help for help, principle. Finally, Tatiana is the object of envy and mistrust in the village. Though others would not freely admit it, Tatiana described some of the struggle she faced as a successful fermer.[11]

In the winter when she and her husband set up their tent, she said, villagers often called the *militsia* or the local authorities to check her documents and to harangue her for possibly having stolen goods. These accusations are unfounded and have never resulted in any proven guilt, but they create a scene and disturb her attempts to sell her goods. In addition, she said there had been robbery attempts on their home—hence the barbed wire and

[11] Although Tatiana attributed all of her problems to her fermer status and relative wealth, it is noteworthy that she did not use her success or wealth to aid her ailing mother or her sister's struggling family. In a culture in which mutual aid is so vital an economic and social activity, one must assume that this further tarnished her household's position in the community.

door fortification. In general, it seems that Tatiana and her husband live a rather socially isolated life in the village.

When other villagers were asked about the 'success' of some who benefited from reorganisation, many mentioned that only those who 'buy and sell things' have been successful, a not-so-covert nod to Tatiana. Though people would not come right out and say they envied her, many slid over the question with comments such as, 'If you want to work like that, then it is your choice. Everyone is free now to do what they want. God wants it this way, everyone has what he deserves. If people can manage to do things, then they do them, though some can't manage'. While some referred to 'black' and 'white' envy (*chernaya* and *belaya zavist*), everyone was adamant that there was no black envy in Moshkino, only 'normal' white envy. Black envy is indicative of someone's hating another so much that they would wish that person harm.

Pasha is a 45-year-old tractor driver who was born in a village near Moshkino. His wife is from the town of Gorodets and is a schoolteacher in Kovrigino. They have two teenage sons whom Pasha does not expect will take up work in agriculture. Pasha lives next door to Tatiana and consulted with her and her husband before he decided to separate from Moshkinskoe and begin farming independently. He knew that his wife could not help him, since she teaches and has some health problems, but he felt he could do it alone with occasional help from his sons.

For three years Pasha farmed ten hectares of land for vegetables and five for grasses. When asked how it went, he said simply, 'Very badly'. He had his own old tractor, which relatives in another village helped him buy from a factory that was not going to use it. The most difficult aspects of farming for Pasha were the long hours, the drudgery, and the lack of machinery. He explained: 'It was a lot of work and boring for one person to do. I'm too old and it's too boring to work by myself. I also needed a combine harvester. Without a harvester you can't do anything. If you ask someone to lend it to you it means you are still dependent on someone to farm your own land'.

Pasha did not like feeling dependent on others. He was usually forced to rent a harvester from Ekaterina, and once to rent from his neighbour, Tatiana's husband. Tatiana echoed the need to feel entirely independent as a fermer. She did not want to expand her landholdings, because if the couple had more land, then they would need more equipment and might have to hire labour. 'I don't like to do that', she said. 'That's why I left the kolkhoz, because I don't like the idea of controlling anybody'. Indeed, Tatiana had recently rented some of her land to Mir, the neighbouring collective farm, because she could not work all of it and did not want to hire outside help.

Pasha eventually rented some of his land back to Ekaterina and rejoined the collective as a tractor driver. He rented 9.6 hectares to Moshkinskoe and retained 22 sotok for himself. He kept his 5 hectares of hay land, which he said was crucial for his family's survival, so Ekaterina does not give him hay as she does others who have given her their shares.[12]

Though Pasha rejoined the collective, he stands somewhat apart in two ways. Because he has a functioning tractor and Moshkinskoe is currently low on machinery, he sometimes rents his tractor to Ekaterina. She provides the petrol and pays him in hay, which he can use for the many animals he keeps at home. He typically sells meat and milk as well as honey from the beehives he keeps behind the house. Like Tatiana in renting her land to Mir, he is acting independently in this exchange, and it reminds people that he has something of value. The actual value might be negligible, but his position nonetheless marks him as someone who has something—a claim few can make. In addition, Pasha acts as a spokesman, though a reluctant one, for the difficulties of fermer-type farming. Others in the village directed me to him when I asked if they thought fermery could succeed in the village. He was a reminder of the perceived futility of the private sector, and his experience may have dampened any illusions of success people might have had when looking at his neighbour, Tatiana. Pasha left the collective, but he came back and was welcomed. People shook their heads at his misfortune more than at his attempt at farming alone, perhaps not feeling so envious of his spirited move since it did, after all, fail.

Enterprise by Non-Elite Families in Zelyonoe and Listnoe

Apart from Nikitin, whose farming success had rapidly gained him a leading position in local affairs, Zelyonoe has no other fermery, though there are a number of privately owned shops. Listnoe, too, has privately owned shops and also a small independent fermer as well as the large pig farmer, Vasilchikov, mentioned earlier. In addition, the *selkhoz tekhnika,* which once provided agricultural machinery for the village as a whole, is now almost out of business, and although the kolkhozy and the two fermery have their own stocks of agricultural machinery, a number of private households have acquired tractors, which they hire out. Other families have invested in lorries.

[12] At least a dozen people interviewed said their main concern in life at the time was whether or not they would have enough hay for the winter. In August 2002, the collective harvest was not looking good, due to a severe drought, and worry was mounting. Others highlighted their desperate need for hay with statements such as, 'Without hay I can't keep animals; without my animals I starve'.

Andrei and Galina Anfimov are aged either side of 40 and live with their 13-year-old daughter and Andrei's 70-year-old mother. Although they have not set up as fermery, their situation is reminiscent of Tatiana's. In the summer they work on their household farm in Listnoe, and during the winter they use their own lorry to trade in agricultural produce. By selling the produce of their domestic farm they earn about 50,000 rubles a year, and during the winter their monthly profits amount to 15,000 rubles—so their annual pre-tax earnings amount to about 140,000 rubles. Although they are a good deal more successful than Tatiana, they share some of the same problems. The work is stressful. Galina complains of the dislocation it involves: she believes the long periods away from home that trading requires do not amount to a proper life. The reason for undertaking them is simply the economic return, which is far greater than that which could be obtained by working for a collective organisation. Galina is aware that some people feel she and her husband have done well out of the new economic conditions, but unlike Tatiana, she has retained her involvement in the system of mutual aid, and her family is able to draw on the assistance of relatives to help pick their potatoes.

A former driver, Chaikov, decided to become a fermer because he liked the idea of working for himself and believed he could make it pay. He is a cheerful, resilient man, and his temperament must have helped him in the face of initial difficulties with officialdom, such as being allocated land 20 kilometres from the village with no convenient source of water. Later, however, he had friendly relations with a new director of one of the kolkhozy. To get the initial amount of land together, he and two friends, who joined him as employees, took their land shares out of the kolkhoz, but most of the land was rented to him from a special land fund run by the raion. Chaikov's farm enterprise now concentrates entirely on grain production; he has abandoned earlier attempts to combine this with livestock rearing and potato growing. He hires tractors out to plough other people's land. He has had his ups and downs, but currently things are going well, and he is considering renting more land from the raion. He has a substantial amount of machinery, including a combine harvester, which he owns outright. Others have not been so successful. For example, there is a large abandoned complex of animal sheds in the centre of Listnoe, formerly run by a fermer who over-reached himself. Chaikov (who drinks a fair bit himself) attributes the failures of other fermery to alcoholism.

Along with the commercial farm, Chaikov's family also has a household farm that they plant with potatoes in the ordinary way and harvest by the usual system of labour exchange with relatives and neighbours. Like the Anfimovs, they seem not to be punished for their commercial success by

social exclusion. There may be personal reasons for this. The Chaikovs are good relatives and good citizens. Chaikov helped his widowed sister-in-law by 'hiring' her pre-adolescent son at harvest time and 'paying' him an unrealistically large quantity of grain. Galina Chaikova is a councillor on the sel'sovet and in this capacity spends a good deal of time helping neighbours with their problems.

The Loneliness of Fermer-hood

The Anfimovs and the Chaikovs are less exceptional figures in Listnoe, a much larger village, than Tatiana and her husband are in tiny Moshkino. A few dozen other families in Listnoe own tractors and lorries and use them commercially. This does not mean that people in Listnoe think it is all right to mix commerce with ties of kinship and neighbourhood. In this respect they are quite as strict as the inhabitants of Moshkino. But the very size of Listnoe means that the dilemma is less sharp. Though it would be out of the question to charge kin or neighbours for ploughing their potato plots, most fellow citizens in Listnoe do not fall into either category and can therefore be charged. At the same time, by ploughing relatives' and neighbours' fields for free, one can build up credit as a good kinsman and friend—which may be the reason the two sisters, one of whose husbands owned a tractor, were able to assemble such a large team of potato pickers. Even so, there seems to be a residual feeling that charging even non-relatives is not quite right. This feeling is detectable in the readiness of tractor owners to tell the ethnographer that they ploughed some people's land gratis but their reluctance to volunteer that in other instances they charged.

In the end, perhaps Pasha and Tatiana exemplify the dilemmas faced by fermery in Russia. One can strike out alone, it seems, but only at the cost of severing social relations with one's customers. And unless one already has good connections, one is unlikely to be offered much alternative support from the official elite. While this leads to acute difficulties in a small village like Moshkino, it is a source of unease even in as large a community as Listnoe. This comes on top of the need to obtain capital and take on organisational activities with which people are unfamiliar. Pasha has come back to the collective but thinks a fermer can make it so long as he likes the work and has money to buy equipment. Poignantly, he added, 'It is still bad to work by yourself. It is better to combine two or three people or a big family or to keep a kolkhoz. It seems better for everyone that way'.

Conclusion

Discussions of Russian agriculture often tacitly assume that collective institutions are associated with state management and are somehow left over from socialism, and that peasant households are the natural locus of independent farming. The very terms *collective* farm and *private* plot suggest that collectivism is imposed and that, left to themselves, household farms would operate as discrete units. Our first conclusion is that this distinction is thoroughly misleading. Household farms are themselves embedded in a network of obligations and expectations that make the practice of household farming almost as much a collective affair as working for a kolkhoz. The difference lies in the kind of collectivity involved. The household economy involves neighbours and especially kin in broadly egalitarian relationships of mutual aid. Successful collective farming draws on a wider labour force and requires the imposition of discipline from above before its mutually beneficial potentialities can be realised. Both kinds of activities draw on feelings of identity and moral obligation, so the successful completion of a shared enterprise is experienced not just in practical terms but as an affirmation of the sense of self and as a gesture of generosity towards other members of the community. Both kinds of cooperative work also involve familiar relationships that are already in place.

The minority of individuals who have struck out on their own as fermery or as registered traders do not have these advantages. Unless they are already members of the managerial elite, their trading relationships have to be built up in an ad hoc way, and many of their neighbours do not recognise the moral worth of what they are doing. Thus social factors, both the existence of networks and their moral valuation, must, other things being equal, make collective activities more appealing than enterprise by isolated family units. There is some evidence—anecdotal only, but consistent with reports from elsewhere in Russia (Hivon 1998)—that people who set up on their own may face obstruction both from envious neighbours and from the administrative elite.

It would be equally wrong, however, to accept the alternative stereotype of Russian peasants whose traditional collectivism leaves them indifferent to individual economic advantage. Both collective enterprises and individual families have responded rationally to the new market conditions by reducing the labour forces of the successor organisations to the kolkhozy and by expanding household production for the market. The latter has expanded furthest in the southern areas, where conditions are more favourable. In two of our three field sites, we even see ordinary families switching allegiance from a collective to an alternative producer (another collective in Moshkino,

a fermer in Zelyonoe) in pursuit of higher economic returns—exactly as the framers of the economic reforms intended.

The Russian country dwellers we have worked with resemble neither isolated maximisers of economic self-interest nor the tradition-bound automata implied by crude culturalist accounts. Instead, the developments we have observed are best understood by viewing the local people as fairly wide awake to economic advantage but also motivated to act in ways that are consistent with their sense of moral obligations and with the pattern of social relationships that actually exists. As a result, people are much happier adapting their existing pattern of household production to market demands and opportunities than making the leap of scale and administrative complexity required to set up as fermery. Commercial farming is more acceptable to the community if it is really large-scale and the entrepreneur demonstrates the capacity to both discipline and care for his labour force. The collapse of communism and the restructuring of large-scale farming following the 1991 law weakened the authority of farm managements, and it has taken some time for a new form of authority to grow that is based on demonstrable commercial success. The result, variously described as feudal or as *hacienda*-like, may not be much to the taste of liberal-minded observers, but as the examples of Zelyonoe and Moshkino show, it seems to be a potentially successful way of combining economic rationality with local values. This is possible, however, only because the leading figures succeed in establishing positions outside—and above—the rest of the community and because, unlike the smaller fermery, they have networks of elite connections to which they can look for practical and moral support.

Can we yet say anything about the likely impact of the recent radical extension of private property rights on this evolving situation? Though we will have to wait some time for factual verification, it would be irresponsible not to point out some of the potential implications. On the positive side, we can hope that the reform will be implemented in a way that gives families a more flexible set of options for the use of their shares of formerly collective land. Instead of a family's having to leave all its land share with the successor organisation or face a complex and discouraging legal process in order to separate it all out, full ownership may make it easier for families to cultivate some of the additional land themselves while continuing to rent out the rest. If a market develops, it may make it easier for the more successful household farms to build up gradually into medium-size commercial enterprises.

On the other hand, there are dangers as well. The most obvious is that the local elites, particularly the managers of the new 'feudal' enterprises, will take the opportunity to acquire land cheaply from their less commercially aware neighbours and convert their current organisational dominance

into a more permanent stratification based on large differentials of wealth. A slightly less obvious danger is that the increased commercialisation of household farming and the increasing economic differentiation of more and less successful households may damage the current egalitarian relations of inter-household mutual aid, with serious implications for both material and emotional well-being. Whatever happens, the Russian countryside will continue to offer fascinating material for social scientific research.

We conclude with some reflections on the differences between the communities discussed in this chapter. Comparing Moshkino and Listnoe, we notice that the latter's more favourable environment makes it possible for Listnoe dwellers to earn substantially more from household-level production. They also seem to place correspondingly more emphasis on practical relationships among kin and neighbours. Identity, too, seems to be defined in terms of kin and of a non-communist version of local geography. This contrasts with the situation in Moshkino, where the collective farms seem to be a focus of local pride. We would not place too much emphasis on these correspondences at this stage: certainly we are not trying to suggest that patterns of identity can be read directly from environmental conditions. However, the findings do suggest that relationships between environment, public policy, patterns of economic cooperation, and local conceptions of identity would be worth further investigation. They might provide one of the keys to understanding variations in social and economic developments in different parts of Russia.

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Chapter 10

Volga Farmers and Arctic Herders
Common (Post)Socialist Experiences in Rural Russia

Patty A. Gray

In discussions of privatisation and farm reorganisation in rural Russia, a divide tends to be drawn between the temperate agricultural zones of southern and European Russia, on the one hand, and, on the other, the tundra and taiga zones of Siberia (in the centre of the Russian Federation) and the Far North (at the eastern end of the Russian Federation). The former are often taken to represent 'Russia' in its essence, whereas the latter tend to be exoticised as something distant and more akin to the rest of the circumpolar Arctic than to Russia. In anthropology, this state of affairs is exacerbated by the fact that ethnographic research undertaken in Siberia and the Far North has tended historically—in both the Soviet and post-Soviet periods—to focus on 'indigenous peoples'. And there is an abundance of such research: witness the post-Soviet flourishing of Western ethnographies (for example, Anderson 2000; Balzer 1999; Grant 1995; Kerttula 2000; Ziker 2002). In contrast, ethnographic research in rural European Russia has focused on 'peasants' and is extremely sparse (cf. Hivon 1995; Miller 2001; Perrotta 1998). Consequently, material on eastern European peasants is sometimes taken to stand in for the lacunae in research on rural Russia, and if Russian peasants seem a world apart from the indigenous reindeer herders of Siberia, then all the more so do eastern European peasants. However, eastern Europe is not Russia, and Siberia is.

In the Soviet system of agriculture, the country and all of its diverse agricultural zones—from the black earth to the boreal tundra—were treated as a whole. 'Agriculture' (*sel'skoe khoziaistvo*) encompassed everything from cereal production and farm animal husbandry to reindeer herding and fox fur farming. In the early 1990s, Russia's privatisation programme was applied evenly across the entire country, so that state and collective farms from Briansk Oblast to Kamchatka were undergoing reorganisation at the same time, according to the same template, with the same immediate results in terms of the organisational forms adopted (Van Atta 1994; Wegren

1998).[1] The same evolving legal system, including a recently passed and hotly debated law on alienation of agricultural land, applies equally in Russia from west to east, notwithstanding regional attempts to loosen the reins of federal control.[2]

In the spirit of comparison that characterised our group at MPISA, I begin this chapter with the question, What would happen if one compared farm reorganisation in a 'peasant' village of European Russia with farm reorganisation in an 'indigenous' village in the northern tundra? I argue that not only is it entirely possible to make such a comparison but indeed such a comparison must be made if one is to understand the full range of implications of privatisation and reorganisation in post-Soviet Russia. Thus I compare two villages from these two regions in Russia in terms of the difficult changes they have undergone as a result of the collapse of the Soviet Union and the implementation of Russia's programme for reorganising state and collective farms. The villages are located at a great distance from each other, and the links between them are few, though not non-existent.[3] One is the village of Snezhnoe, located in the western tundra of the Chukotka Autonomous Region (see map), which is itself located on the farthest north-eastern border of Russia just opposite the U.S. state of Alaska on the Bering Strait. The other village is Paigusovo, located near the Volga River in the Republic of Marii El, which is itself located in central European Russia about midway between Moscow and the Ural Mountains.[4] Snezhnoe's population is predominantly Chukchi, an ethnic group classed as an 'indigenous people' in

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[1] Regional variations in organisational forms and in policy began to develop later as failing enterprises were again reorganised or consolidated and varying forms of property were adopted.

[2] Although a few federal laws apply specifically to the North and are tailored to local conditions there, there are also special laws applying, for example, only to the Volga region or only to the black earth region. That is, Siberia is not an isolated case set off from the rest of Russian agriculture.

[3] My selection of the village in Marii El—and in fact the impetus for the entire project—came as a result of my close acquaintance with a Chukotkan family which has kin connections in that village. The husband and father of this family was born and raised in Marii El and made arrangements for me to be hosted by his sister and her husband, who is the mayor of Paigusovo.

[4] My depth of experience in Snezhnoe, which I have visited three times since 1996, far exceeds that in Paigusovo, which I visited once briefly in 2001. However, my long experience working in Snezhnoe and my familiarity with village records there did lay a foundation for working efficiently in Paigusovo, such that I was able to accomplish far more there in much less time than I had ever managed to do in Snezhnoe. Moreover, my excellent contacts in Paigusovo as a result of the Chukotka Marii El link (see note 3) greatly facilitated my research. Because I was living in a home with a family in Paigusovo, I had much more intimate access to local lifeways even than in Snezhnoe, where I was always provided my own separate apartment.

both Russian nationality politics and scholarly ethnic sensibilities, whereas Paigusovo's population is predominantly Mari, a Finno-Ugrian ethnic group in which Finnish and Hungarian scholars take a particular interest.

Neither Chukchis nor Maris have previously been studied ethnographically in terms of how they have adapted to the reorganisation of the collective farms that had been at the centre of their social lives for most of the twentieth century. Both groups have been studied primarily in terms of their ethnic identity—Maris as participants in the wider Finno-Ugrian identity (see Lallukka 2001; Saarinen 2001; Taagepera 2001), and Chukchis as participants in the 'Small Peoples of the North' in Russia or the wider 'Fourth World' indigenous identity (see Gray 1998; Kerttula 1997; Krupnik and Vakhtin 2002). Yet both groups have been equal participants in the socialist system of collectivised agriculture in the Soviet Union, and this point forms the basis for comparison in this chapter. The details of each group's participation in Soviet agriculture are quite different. In Snezhnoe, the main eco-

nomic activity of the local *sovkhoz* (state farm) was reindeer herding, whereas in Paigusovo the local *kolkhoz* (collective farm) was engaged in cereal and potato cropping and dairy farming. Yet in each case the rhythms of life were regulated by the farm production plan and socialist competition, by the quest to establish 'culture' in what were considered backward rural areas, and by respect for the farm director as the main boss of the village. Moreover, both Chukchis and Maris were acutely aware of being Not Russian in a Soviet Union dominated by Russian 'elder brothers'.

What I have found in both villages is that, although the general sentiment since the collapse of the Soviet Union has been a preference to continue working collectively in some form, the villagers who are doing the best job of surviving and creating stability for themselves are those who have abandoned any remnants of the collective farm that still exist and have found ways to become self-sufficient and, in some cases, even entrepreneurial. However, lest this be taken as a recommendation of individual entrepreneurship as the solution to problems in rural Russia, I must note that even those who might seem to be individually self-sufficient actually rely on some form of collective mutual aid, whether kin-based or neighbourly. The few who have made a success of entrepreneurship are uniquely enterprising individuals who would probably have pursued such a course and made a success of it under any circumstances, a point that Liesl Gambold Miller has noted elsewhere (2002: 230). Moreover, these are people who started out with advantages they had accrued in the Soviet period and that reorganisation either did not erode or in some cases actually enhanced. There simply are not adequate resources—land, animals, equipment, ready cash—for everyone to be equally entrepreneurial, and the most successful are in many cases those who succeed in monopolising available resources to the exclusion of others. Moreover, the barriers to obtaining credit with which to purchase inputs are overwhelming for most villagers. Therefore, rather than advocating individual entrepreneurship, the best recommendation seems to be for greater support for existing collective structures in the village, which could balance the lack of access to exclusive control of resources. My conclusions thus reinforce those of Miller and Heady in this volume.

The agrarian question as it was posed by nineteenth-century Marxists and twentieth-century Leninists (see Kautsky 1988 [1899]) stemmed from a view of the peasantry as a problem, specifically as an obstacle to socialist revolution. It was a 'What is to be done?' question demanding a solution. In the context of the postsocialist reform of agriculture in Russia, it seems that the form of the question (peasantry as problem) has not changed, but the socialist content has merely been replaced with capitalist content. I would suggest that the twenty-first-century agrarian question for Russia should be

posed not as a problem but truly as a question, namely this: How are individuals and families and communities in rural Russia managing to live their daily lives and look toward the future? What are their concerns, their strategies, their failures, and their successes? How can their own local priorities be supported? It is, if you will, a question of moral economy. This is at the centre of my ethnography of these two villages in rural Russia. In the sections that follow, I focus on the lives of village residents in Paigusovo and Snezhnoe in their experience of the post-Soviet changes happening around them and to them.

Snezhnoe and Paigusovo: A Tale of Two Villages

My description of each village focuses narrowly on the village location itself, although in both cases there is a wider context. Limiting the focus in this way helps make the cases more comparable; the two villages by themselves are quite similar, but as the focus pulls farther and farther back to take in more of the surrounding context, there are more and more contrasts to account for. In the case of Paigusovo, which is the administrative centre for an association of villages governed by a single *sel'sovet,* or rural council, the wider context takes in 22 smaller hamlets (with a total population of 1,719) and a network of criss-crossing relationships among them. Some inhabitants of these hamlets are employed in the former 'Paigusovskoe' kolkhoz based in the village of Paigusovo. The total landholding of the wider Paigusovo sel'sovet is about 4,000 hectares, the majority of which is under crop production. In the case of Snezhnoe, an isolated village in the tundra, the wider context takes in mobile brigades of reindeer herders, who have similar criss-crossing relationships. These herders are employed in the former 'Anadyrskii' sovkhoz based in the village of Snezhnoe. The total landholding of the former sovkhoz is in the order of three million hectares. For the purposes of this chapter, the 22 hamlets surrounding Paigusovo and the reindeer brigades orbiting Snezhnoe are for the most part left out of the picture. I focus instead on the main village in each case, which occupies the centre of the constellation.

The two villages are roughly the same size, in both physical dimensions and population (Table 10.1). They also show similarities in average household size (about three persons per household) and ethnic composition—Russians comprise a small minority in each case. Neither has any paved roads, although Paigusovo is at least connected to the district centre and the regional capital by paved roads. Snezhnoe has no outside road links whatsoever. It can be reached only by river barge and helicopter in the summer and fall or via the 'winter road' that is carved along the frozen Anadyr' River by passenger tanks (*vezdekhody*) from January to late April.

This makes Snezhnoe's residents far more isolated and less mobile than Paigusovo's.

Table 10.1: Profiles of the Two Villages, Paigusovo and Snezhnoe

Variable	Paigusovo (2001 Data)	Snezhnoe (1996 Data)
Population	320	376
Number of households	96	122
Average household size	3.3 persons (range 1–6 persons)	3.1 persons (range 1–9 persons)
Ethnic breakdown	Mari, 93% Russian, 6% Chuvash, 1%	Chukchi, 47% Chuvan, 27% Russian, 16% Other, 10%[a]
Households with land	Virtually all	22
Average size of holdings	About 3 ha (range 0.4–15 ha)	207 m^2 (about 0.02 ha) (range 16–832 m^2)

[a] Includes Chuvash, Evenk, Jewish, Itel'men, Komi, Koryak, Lamut, Nentsy, Ukrainian, Yukagir, and Yakut.

Village layout is remarkably similar in the two cases, owing to the determination with which the Soviet Union sought to establish fully functioning and standardised villages in even its remotest regions. In both villages, substantial new construction occurred in the 1980s. Each village has a central lane lined with its key institutions: the sovkhoz or kolkhoz headquarters, the sel'sovet office, the House of Culture, the library, and the school. In each village, a store is located a short walk from this 'centre', and dedicated residential districts are laid out on detectable grids. Paigusovo being much older, its houses are primarily wooden, single-family dwellings with carved wooden trim typical of the Volga region. These houses have no plumbing but have wells located nearby. A few newer, brick-and-plaster duplexes near the kolkhoz headquarters, for the most part inhabited by former key kolkhoz personnel, have plumbing. Snezhnoe has no single-family dwellings but is dominated by housing of three types: older, single-storey, multiple-unit

buildings; newer, two-storey, 8-unit buildings near the sovkhoz headquarters (which was similarly occupied by key sovkhoz personnel in the past); and the most recent type, two-storey, 16-unit apartment complexes. There is no plumbing in the village, but water is drawn from the nearby river through pipes to communal spigots. A key difference in the way space is structured in the two villages is that in Paigusovo, housing plots were designed to allow adjoining space for household gardening and animal keeping, whereas in Snezhnoe no need was seen for this. The resulting block construction makes the village incongruously reminiscent of a micro-city.

In both places, land immediately surrounding the village centre is exploited by villagers for personal use. In Paigusovo, where the land is carefully partitioned into cultivated parcels that have been assigned to families by the sel'sovet, virtually all families possess some land. I had ready access to maps that showed the layout and family distribution of these plots, along with their areas in hectares. This land is planted with crops that are used partially for subsistence and animal fodder but primarily for the market, with cabbages, potatoes, and hay among the key crops. In Snezhnoe, documents showed that perhaps two dozen families had been allotted plots of land near the village upon which to build crude greenhouses, although maps of these parcels were not available and administration officials were equivocal about exactly how land had been assigned. However, in a sense, all Snezhnoe villagers have as much a relationship to land as do the villagers of Paigusovo, because they all—in particular indigenous residents—feel a sense of moral entitlement to the tundra.

For the most part, the land surrounding Snezhnoe for a radius of several kilometres is uncultivated and is an important source of wild plant resources that all villagers harvest, both communally and cooperatively—a variety of berries, mushrooms, pine nuts, and other tundra roots and leaves. Some of the gathered resources are kept for household use, and some are traded to the sovkhoz for staple foods such as flour, oil, rice, and macaroni. Villagers are also able to exploit fish (the village is located on a major river) and game, although technically much of what they harvested is considered poaching. Thus, although specific parcels of land were assigned to very few families in Snezhnoe, each household nevertheless counted land as one of its assets.

Occupations in the two villages are strikingly similar. In both cases, the remnant of the former sovkhoz or kolkhoz remains the key employer. The total number of people officially employed in the Paigusovo kolkhoz in 2001 was 385, more than half the total workforce, but this included residents from the surrounding hamlets. The total number officially employed in the Snezhnoe sovkhoz in 1996 was 86, again more than half the total workforce.

In both villages, the other occupations included those of teacher (accounting for almost as many jobs as the following categories combined), shop clerk, medical technician, administrator, and employee of the House of Culture, the library, or one of the utilities (telephone office, heat, and electricity). In neither village was there any kind of manufacturing or other productive enterprise aside from the sovkhoz or kolkhoz.

The occupational structure in Snezhnoe has changed much more in recent years than that in Paigusovo, and this is related to migration issues. After the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 and the subsequent reorganisation of the state farm, a large number of non-native residents in Snezhnoe left the village to return to the other parts of Russia from which they had come. They had originally been attracted to Snezhnoe by well-paid professional positions in which they could earn salaries much higher than those they could have earned outside of the Russian North. Consequently, Snezhnoe lost nearly its entire top tier of sovkhoz professionals—director, economist, accountant, radio operator, warehouse supervisor, construction supervisor, and chief mechanic—as well as several teachers and the trained professionals in the village sel'sovet who had maintained village records.[5] This loss of professionals caused a crisis in the village, and for a number of years their positions were simply left vacant, as no one else was available who was trained to do the work (eventually standards were lowered, and untrained personnel began to fill these positions).

Paigusovo's population has remained much more stable since the collapse of the Soviet Union, because the majority of residents were born and raised in the surrounding district, if not in the village itself. The kolkhoz did lose some of its key professionals, but these people generally shifted to other professional positions in the village (for example, the former kolkhoz director became the mayor) or to private farming. Trained professionals remaining in the kolkhoz were moved into the vacated positions—not an option for Snezhnoe, where there was always a shortage of trained professionals to begin with. In spite of this difference, which would seem to favour the Paigusovo kolkhoz over the Snezhnoe sovkhoz, both village enterprises were failing.

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[5] This loss of trained professionals accounts for the difference in the quality of the records I was able to obtain in each village. In Paigusovo, village records were up-to-date and neatly maintained, and I was given free access to them, as well as cheerful assistance in interpreting them. In Snezhnoe, records were already many years out-of-date, their accuracy was doubtful, and there was no one knowledgeable enough to provide adequate assistance in interpreting them—although access to record books was freely given.

The Socialist Background

Ironically, although Snezhnoe is much more remote than Paigusovo, the Snezhnoe sovkhoz is much older than the Paigusovo kolkhoz. The sel'sovet of Paigusovo was formed out of its 22 villages in 1954 (the villages themselves are much older), and the kolkhoz was brought together in the main village at about that time. The location of Snezhnoe, however, was targeted for the establishment of a new village and sovkhoz by the Soviet Department of Agriculture in 1929, at a time when the collectivisation movement was barely under way across the country. It was one of a handful of experimental stations set up in regions of the Far North to prepare the way for the establishment of sovkhozy as the primary organisational form of the reindeer economy, and in fact it was the first sovkhoz to be established in Chukotka (Druri 1989: 4). The early start can be accounted for by the zeal of the Soviet authorities. In many ways, Chukotka's very remoteness and intractableness made it a particularly enticing challenge to the Soviet mission of bringing socialist enlightenment to every dark corner of the country. The idea seemed to be that if it could be made to work in Chukotka—a place so far from the centre and so close to the capitalist 'Other' in the United States—then it could surely be made to work anywhere.

I have been using two terms to refer to these collectivised enterprises: kolkhoz and sovkhoz. A common pattern in collectivisation began with the initial creation of a kolkhoz (a collective enterprise), and many of these kolkhozy were later consolidated with others and converted into sovkhozy (state enterprises). But both Paigusovo and Snezhnoe were exceptions. In the case of Paigusovo, the enterprise remained a kolkhoz until the time of reorganisation in the early 1990s, and the remnant enterprise is to this day commonly referred to as 'the kolkhoz'. In Snezhnoe, the enterprise was created as a sovkhoz from the very start, a rare case in the Soviet Union. As in Paigusovo, Snezhnoe residents refer to the remnant enterprise as they always have, as 'the sovkhoz'.

The differing initial organisational forms of the two enterprises account for an important difference in the experience of the workers. In a sovkhoz, workers were considered employees of the state and were paid a regular salary. Thus Snezhnoe's *sovkhozniki* were conditioned early on to a factory-like work discipline and an employee mentality. The sovkhoz was apparently quite successful and experienced growth throughout its existence. With their regular salaries, the employees—even reindeer herders—enjoyed purchasing power in the village store, which was well stocked and through which even new furniture and eventually television sets could be ordered. In Paigusovo, *kolkhozniki* were initially paid for their labour only in kind with kolkhoz products. The only source of cash was through the *priusadebnyi*

uchastok, or personal garden plot adjoining the farmstead, plus personal livestock holdings. Thus villagers were highly motivated to give time and effort to their personal plots, but as kolkhozniki they were obliged to work a minimum number of days per year for the kolkhoz or face a penalty.

Yet here is also a key difference between the life experiences of villagers in the two villages. In Paigusovo, each household was allotted up to 0.4 hectare for a personal garden plot, and the climate allowed the planting of a full range of garden vegetables. Snezhnoe is located in the Arctic tundra, where household gardening is nearly impossible without a greenhouse. Individual greenhouses would have been rarities in Soviet times, if only because building materials were locally unavailable and difficult to obtain (greenhouses built in the 1990s seem to have been cobbled together with salvaged wood, and the village administration allocated plastic sheeting to cover them in the growing season). For similar reasons, animal keeping, too, was uncommon in Snezhnoe, except in the sovkhoz, whereas in Paigusovo each household was allowed to keep up to two sows, one cow, and an unlimited number of chickens.

In the absence of household garden plots, gathering of wild tundra resources from the area surrounding the village was an activity in which Snezhnoe residents always engaged to supplement their diets. Yet villagers described a different atmosphere when they spoke of the Soviet period—back then, gathering was treated more as an afternoon outing, something families and friends did for the pleasure of the activity as well as the pleasure of the extra food products. Although they continued to engage collectively in food gathering in the post-Soviet period, there was now a sense of desperate dependence on this resource for subsistence. I often encountered women returning from a day's gathering, and their emotional state ranged from cheerfully ecstatic, if they had a full bucket of berries to show, to nervously despondent, if the day's pickings had been slim.

In the 1970s the Paigusovo kolkhoz started paying a small salary and sharing proceeds from the sale of the harvest (meaning that each worker received a share according to the amount he had harvested personally). This enabled kolkhozniki to live off their salaries and accumulate savings by selling their personal produce, something that was encouraged by the state, as evidenced by the fact that state procurement centres were set up to buy products. Thus, although it was still technically a kolkhoz, the enterprise began to resemble a sovkhoz, and the villagers' lifestyle became more similar to that in Snezhnoe in terms of work rhythms and financial security.

The 1980s were a time of significant reorganisation in agriculture across the Soviet Union as a result of a new policy instituted by Gorbachev beginning in 1986. A key component of the new policy was an approach

called *khozraschet,* or self-accounting, which handed over to enterprises—or, in the case of Paigusovo, directly to brigades of workers—the responsibility for production. Enterprises still received a plan from above, and they still sold their produce to the state for predictable prices, but they had to take on more responsibility for organising their own labour with the resources at their disposal. After subtracting expenses, they got whatever was left over from the sale of produce. Villagers in both Paigusovo and Snezhnoe pinpoint this as the time when the tumultuous process of reorganisation began, rather than the period of post-Soviet reforms in the 1990s.

Bringing Privatisation to the Village

The basic facts of the process of privatisation in Russia are by now well known. In 1991, then-president Boris Yeltsin began issuing a series of decrees requiring all state enterprises in Russia, including kolkhozy and sovkhozy, to reorganise themselves into joint stock companies, or 'farming enterprises' (*fermerskoe khoziaistvo*) (see Wegren 1994). This precipitated a ripple of responses throughout Russia's regions as local administrations began seeking ways to implement the new policies. In both Paigusovo and Chukotka, this reorganisation was accompanied by a great buzz of opinion and much public speculation about what the future held for villagers. In Paigusovo, the early 1990s came to be characterised as the time of the 'farmer movement' (*fermerskoe dvizhenie*), because individual, entrepreneurial farming was clearly the model being pushed for adoption on all fronts. However, those who opted to become individual farmers—that is, to sever their links to whatever fate awaited the kolkhoz—remained in the minority. Several villagers in Paigusovo reported to me that those who took the entrepreneurial step to become a farmer (*fermer*) were stigmatised and distrusted in Paigusovo at first. The vast majority of villagers, faced with negative opinion and what seemed like overwhelming practical obstacles, took what they viewed as the safest course and kept their land in the collective enterprise. Even some of those who took their land out merely farmed it on the side while they kept other jobs in the village.

In Snezhnoe—actually, in Chukotka generally—rather than the changes being seen as a 'farmer movement', there was instead much rhetoric about indigenous peoples returning to 'traditional' forms of economy, regaining their ancestral land, and finally becoming owners of their reindeer herds once again. Newspaper articles of the period generally conveyed a positive attitude towards this 'herder' movement, although perhaps it was merely the novelty of imagining indigenous peoples as entrepreneurs that garnered the positive attention. Here, too, those who privatised reindeer herds and broke away from the collective enterprises in Chukotka (whether

indigenous herders or Russian entrepreneurs) were in the minority. In Snezhnoe only 1 brigade of reindeer herders, out of 4 remaining brigades in the sovkhoz (at its height in the late 1980s there had been 12) opted to take the individual, entrepreneurial route, withdrawing 21 employees (of about 84) from the main sovkhoz in 1992. This enterprise now had to negotiate market conditions and become entirely self-sufficient, bargaining where it could for supplies, transportation, access to markets, and so forth, either with the director of the remnant sovkhoz or with independent, itinerant traders. This proved more difficult than anyone had anticipated, and the new enterprise gave up within a year and rejoined the main remnant sovkhoz.

Thus, individual herding was short-lived in Snezhnoe. But individual *farmsteading* by former sovkhoz employees (those not directly engaged in herding reindeer) slowly began to emerge as an option pursued by an enterprising few. Later on, entrepreneurial hunting also became the aspiration of several former herders. These trends in Snezhnoe, along with the development of individual farming in Paigusovo, are discussed in what follows.

The Distribution of Property

In neither Paigusovo nor Snezhnoe are there any pre-collectivisation records of individual title to land in the village or its environs. In Snezhnoe, the reasons are obvious: the village was constructed on tundra that was, in effect, being colonised by the Soviet Union as the village and its sovkhoz were established. When I asked villagers in Paigusovo about pre-collectivisation land titles, most said they did not really know about them but doubted there were any such records. One consultee said he believed there had been *obshchiny* (communal settlements) in the area before the revolution, which would have collectively owned the land, and that there had never been any major landlords in the area. Thus neither the Paigusovo kolkhoz nor the Snezhnoe sovkhoz had to be concerned about the restitution of specific land or property. Both villages consequently followed a formula for property and land distribution that seems to have been fairly standard throughout the Russian countryside.[6] In general, two kinds of property got distributed: 'property shares' (*immushchestvennyi pai*) and 'land shares' (*zemel'nyi pai*).

[6] Liquidation of kolkhozy and sovkhozy was not obligatory in Russia. One of Yeltsin's decrees, in response to protests over the initial insistence that all such organisations had to thoroughly privatise, allowed the option of essentially retaining the same organisational structure and merely re-registering the enterprise with a new name. This option was followed in both Paigusovo and Snezhnoe. Even in this case, however, kolkhoz and sovkhoz members had to be given the prerogative of opting out of the collective and taking their shares with them.

Property Shares (immushchestvennyi pai) in the Kolkhoz/Sovkhoz

Property shares could be claimed only by kolkhozniki or sovkhozniki who quit the enterprise altogether—by taking the shares, they were basically cashing out and striking out on their own. These shares could not be claimed as land, which was handled separately. Rather, they were formulated as a cash value equivalent to what the employee was entitled to take. The value of each employee's share was calculated according to how many years the person had worked and what salary level he or she had reached. The shares had to be claimed directly from the kolkhoz or sovkhoz and were generally paid in kind (if they were paid at all), even though they were assigned a cash value. In practice, one had to claim these shares at the very start of the privatisation process or in effect forfeit them, because in later years both the remnant kolkhoz in Paigusovo and the remnant sovkhoz in Snezhnoe were in debt and had virtually no assets from which to pay out any more property shares, either in cash or in kind.

In both Paigusovo and Snezhnoe I heard tales of shares that were never collected and whose owners knew they never would be. In Paigusovo my host, Leonid, the current mayor of the village, who had been director of the kolkhoz at the time of privatisation, did not claim his share right away. He was equivocal about the reasons why, but it was fairly clear that it had been a matter of conscience, as if taking his shares out of the collective would have been immoral, at least at the time. His wife, Angelina, told me without hesitation that it had been a mistake, since as director of the kolkhoz he had the biggest share, and there was much they could have done with it. His share remains on the books, as though waiting to be claimed, but both husband and wife know they will never get it even if they ask for it, and they will not ask for it now.

In Snezhnoe, when I mentioned an interest in understanding the distribution of shares to Valentin, one of the deputy directors of the remnant sovkhoz, he told me that he and his wife, Irina, still had their certificates attesting to their shares in the sovkhoz. He said this with derisive laughter and invited me to come by and view the certificates. During my visit, Irina had to rummage at length through piles of long-undisturbed family belongings before she was able to produce the certificates. Valentin said they were useless pieces of paper, and he likened them to the now-worthless 10,000 ruble privatisation vouchers that every Russian citizen had received as one of the first steps in the privatisation of state enterprises (one of these vouchers was given to me as a gift by another villager). Valentin had plans to hang onto his certificates in order to show them to his grandchildren someday, as a testament to the absurdity of those times.

In Snezhnoe (more so than in Paigusovo) I was told of villagers—mainly the Russian and Ukrainian sovkhoz professionals mentioned earlier—who opportunistically took their shares out of the sovkhoz in whatever form they could, whether in cash or in kind, and essentially fled the village. Villagers clearly viewed this as an immoral act: a pilfering of the assets of the sovkhoz, which ought to remain available for collective benefit and be reinvested in the growth of the village. The implication was that those who had no deep ties to the village felt no sense of obligation to its collective welfare. Valentin himself, although he and his family stayed in the village and clearly had no intentions of leaving, was criticised by other villagers for having improperly appropriated sovkhoz assets for personal use, thus excluding other villagers from benefiting from them. A prime example given was his possession of the sovkhoz milk separator, which his family used to make cream cheese for themselves. Villagers who, in the past, took for granted the availability of such dairy products in the village store could now enjoy them only by purchasing them from Valentin, if and when he offered them for sale, which he did at prices most villagers could no longer afford.

'Land Shares' (zemel'nyi pai)

The distribution of land represents one of the sharpest distinctions between Paigusovo and Snezhnoe, for the reasons already discussed regarding land use. The very measurement of land in the two villages is indicative of these differences—in Paigusovo it is measured in hectares, and in Snezhnoe it is measured in square meters. Paigusovo's land distribution scheme was much more orderly and comprehensive.

In Snezhnoe, small land plots (typically about 50 square meters) began to be allotted to villagers in 1991, primarily for the construction of the greenhouses that now exist scattered about the edges of the village. I found only sparse records of these land allotments in the books of the sel'sovet. I also observed a few tiny kitchen gardens that had been cobbled together next to the front stoops of apartment buildings, essentially creeping into the street (which, being dirt, was easy to encroach upon). However, I found no records of this land being officially allotted for this purpose. In most cases, these enterprising kitchen gardeners were Russians and Ukrainians who had come to Chukotka as adults in search of well-paid work and had good memories of such gardening in their hometowns. The climate did not allow them to grow much besides carrots, potatoes, cabbages, and greens, and these were dwarfed because of the short growing season and poor conditions.

According to sel'sovet records in Snezhnoe, 22 households have landholdings, with an average holding of 207 square meters (plots range from 16 to 832 square meters). In one case, 150 square meters were allotted to one

new enterprise for the purpose of setting up a pig farm. This person had already left Snezhnoe before 1995, when I arrived, and I heard stories from other villagers about his ill-fated attempt to set up an entrepreneurial enterprise in the village. The short-lived independent reindeer herding enterprise was allotted 342,500 hectares on a 50–year lease, but the land had already reverted to the sovkhoz before I arrived. The idea of anyone else applying for and receiving a share of land from the sovkhoz for any purpose seemed not to be considered an option and was never discussed by anyone. There had been no scheme for assigning shares of sovkhoz land as there had been for assigning shares of sovkhoz property. The tundra was marked by the regional land committee expressly as reindeer pasture, and so the only way to legitimate a request for land would have been to establish an independent reindeer enterprise. But with reindeer herding generally on the decline in Chukotka, this was an increasingly unlikely scenario.

In Paigusovo, plenty of land was available to be distributed for individual (household or entrepreneurial) farming, in either of two forms. The first, called the 'district norm', consisted of up to 1 hectare per household. This land came not from the kolkhoz but from the district (*raion*) land fund. Each district in the Republic of Marii El was allowed to set its own norm, calculated on the amount of available land and the number of households in the district. During the Soviet period, the district norm for Gornomariiskii District, where Paigusovo is located, was 0.4 hectare per household. In 1992 it was raised to 1 hectare per household. All one had to do to get the extra 0.6 hectare was come to the sel'sovet office and write out a statement asking for the land, and one or more plots would be found and assigned to the applicant. Not everyone applied for it—only 400 or so households out of 609 in the Paigusovo sel'sovet received this additional land. The remaining households still have the chance to take it whenever they wish.

'Land shares' (*zemel'nyi pai*) were the second form in which allocations were available—up to 1.9 hectares per person. This was land distributed by the kolkhoz itself (although technically kolkhoz land can be said ultimately to come from the district fund). It was distributed among residents of the sel'sovet, and from descriptions of it I understood the allocation of such land to be considered something of a collective trust. The land was assigned not per household but per person, with the stipulation that one had to have been a working adult at the time of the reorganisation of the kolkhoz and the distribution of the land shares. It was not necessary to have been an employee of the kolkhoz—one could have been working at any job in the village—which shows how interconnected the kolkhoz and the village were. The amount of land distributed per person varied in each kolkhoz. In Paigosovo, the standard allotted share was 1.9 hectares per person. Many villagers

commented that the kolkhoz gave up this land begrudgingly and relinquished only the worst agricultural land.

With these two sources of land, no individual could personally possess more than 2.9 hectares. Because land was parcelled out from different land funds at different times, one household's land might be scattered in several small parcels around the village. For example, Leonid and Angelina had five small plots, the two largest lying about two kilometres from their house. Yet a very few people, I was told, had rather large landholdings. How did they do it? There were two possibilities: first, it was possible to rent land officially from the district, up to certain limits, and second, it was possible to arrange unofficially to take over plots of land. A small number of enterprising farmers in the district—I learned of only one such case in Paigusovo—simply went around to surrounding villages and found people who had the right to land but could not or did not want to work it for one reason or another. Arrangements were made for the aspiring entrepreneur to take over this land in every way except officially in name. Such agreements were informal. I was told at the district land committee office that, although this practice seemed to violate the spirit of the law, people got away with it because there was no law explicitly prohibiting it.

Ownership of land remains a rather fuzzy matter in both villages. In each case, although laws about the purchase and sale of land in Russia have recently been passed and the concept of private property has been pushed on villagers for over a decade now, few people express any need or desire to exercise exclusive ownership over the land they possess or use. Most people seem to treat land almost as a sacred trust. It is not something to be taken lightly—in Paigusovo, having possession of land came with serious and complicated responsibilities, as we saw from the fact that land could be taken back if it was not worked productively. In both cases, when villagers acquired land, they did not purchase it. Rather, the land came as their share, which they received not by virtue of pre-collectivisation ownership or even necessarily only by virtue of working in the kolkhoz or sovkhoz. They got it by virtue of being a citizen: having a modest land share was a basic citizen entitlement. At the time they received it, the land was still legally considered the property of the Russian state, and everyone seemed comfortable with this—legal ownership by another did not interfere with one's use rights. Nor did it interfere with the intimate relationship people had with the land.

Although the nature of the relationship to land in Paigusovo and Snezhnoe differs, in each case the relationship is imbued with significant meaning. Villagers in both locations clearly show their knowledge of the land, although it is knowledge of different kinds. In Paigusovo, where each household has exclusive use of a tiny parcel, every square meter of it is

intimately known, and production is coaxed out of the last centimetre. In Snezhnoe, the individual greenhouse plots notwithstanding, the main focus in terms of land is the vast tundra, measured in millions of hectares. Especially for indigenous residents, this land is seen as a cultural legacy that is shared with others. The intimacy of knowledge of it lies on a different level. It is not the varying characteristics of square meters that is known but rather the varying moods of mountains, rivers, lakes, and rocks—especially by those who make regular trips out to the reindeer brigades (which is by no means all residents). But even those who are village-bound wander far in the surrounding tracts of tundra, and they have always seen this as something shared with fellow villagers. Thus it is odd for them to experience increasing competition for good berry-gathering patches as their need for barterable resources becomes more acute.

Privatisation Pressures

In both Paigusovo and Snezhnoe, there were compelling reasons to remain linked to the collective enterprise, and striking out on one's own required a degree of courage and determination that few in either village possessed. In Paigusovo, the obstacles to private farming revolved primarily around the distribution of land and the obligations that came with it. To begin with, the process itself was extremely bureaucratic, involving the kolkhoz, the district executive committee, and the district land committee. One had to demonstrate the ability to work the specified amount of land productively before it would be given—if the land was not worked, it could be taken away and placed back in the land fund. Moreover, a person who was taking his land share out of the kolkhoz also had to take possession of his work record (*trudovaia kniga*), an act that was highly symbolic and carried sobering consequences. Every working adult in Russia has a work record, kept in a little red booklet, which bears the only evidence of his life's work history, and this record is essential for activating local and federal social welfare benefits. This work record was held by the employer for as long as a person was on the personnel rolls. Thus, when one 'checked out' as a kolkhoz employee, one also forfeited the social safety net that came with being a kolkhoz member and an employee of a recognised organisation.

Moreover, if one took land, one had to become registered officially with the district administration *as a farmer.* Such registration carried the obligation not only to work the land but also to show a profit from it. Land that was not worked could be taken away. Farmers who did not turn a profit, showing at least some small income from the land on the tax return for a given year, lost a year in the calculation towards receiving a state pension—an extra year would have to be worked before the pension would kick in. A

kolkhoznik does not have to worry about this—all he must do is stay on the kolkhoz personnel roll to keep his pension clock ticking. Thus, an independent farmer has much greater insecurity. And besides these logistical problems, there was the psychological component of being classed as a farmer, since farmers were stigmatised and distrusted in Paigusovo at first. This had begun to change by the time I arrived there in 2001, when several villagers mused that they had begun to consider taking up independent farming.

In Snezhnoe, it was unthinkable for most sovkhoz employees to leave their jobs, unless they managed to find another job in the village and make a simple transition to it, and in some cases even that was not as simple as it might seem. With privatisation, long-standing state subsidies that had kept the reindeer herding industry afloat during the Soviet period were no longer forthcoming, which in effect meant the instant disappearance of salaries for sovkhoz employees. By the time I arrived in Snezhnoe in 1996, sovkhoz employees had already gone several years without a paycheck and were scrambling to get by. Their salaries were still calculated on paper, but so were their debts to the sovkhoz. Valentin, the sovkhoz deputy director, reeled off for me the myriad deductions typically made from a sovkhoz worker's paycheck: 2% for the pension fund, 13% for income tax, income advances for staple foods and shares of reindeer meat, a 6% reduction if the employee was childless. He said many sovkhoz employees were actually in debt to the sovkhoz and could not break away until that debt was resolved in some way. Employees on other payrolls—the village administration, for example—also experienced salary delays at times, but not nearly as often or for as long as sovkhoz employees did. This resulted in a creeping sort of class differentiation emerging among the villagers.

One place where this differentiation manifested itself most noticeably was the village store. Though all villagers at times suffered cash flow problems and had to take food from the store on credit, the store became increasingly reluctant to advance such credit to sovkhoz employees, reasoning that they might never receive their overdue salary payments, whereas they trusted administration employees to pay their bills (and in fact the bills were paid by direct transfer from the village budget). Eventually, sovkhoz employees came to be considered something like deadbeats at the store and were denied credit altogether. This lent added urgency to the activity of gathering berries and pine nuts in the surrounding tundra, because they represented sovkhoz employees' only chance to obtain cash or to barter for staple foods.

Remnant Collective Enterprises

Although the majority of kolkhoz and sovkhoz employees in both Paigusovo and Snezhnoe have chosen to stay with the collective enterprise, in both cases that remnant enterprise has barely managed to stay afloat and has experienced perennial problems and difficulties. In Paigusovo, the former kolkhoz was reorganised and renamed 'Collective Shareholders Enterprise Paigusovskoe' (*kollektivnoe dolevoe predpriiatie Paigusovskoe*). The former economist of the kolkhoz, who was now engaged in full-time private farming, told me that all of the most talented professionals had left the kolkhoz during the reorganisation. She said the remnant enterprise had survived up to that point only because the kolkhoz before it had been so generously subsidised by the state that huge surpluses of inputs remained, and the enterprise had been living off those surpluses for many years. The last director of the kolkhoz (the current village mayor) had been director for 18 years before deciding that the period of reorganisation was the right time for him to move on. Since then, the remnant enterprise had gone through several directors, each one giving up after only a short time and leaving the enterprise further in debt, while the confidence of the villagers plummeted ever lower.

The current director is a young man who had taken over the job only six months before I arrived. He paints a bleak picture. The enterprise officially employs 385 people, but he has about 200 workers on the books who do not actually come to work. They are engaged in other activities (many are presumably working household plots) but are reluctant to remove themselves from the kolkhoz rolls for the reasons stated earlier. Most branches of production are defunct—the dairy, grain, and vegetable branches are active, but pigs and chickens were given up, and the apple orchards are left untended (my hostess, Angelina, said employees harvested the apples for their own use or took them to market and kept the proceeds).

The director lamented the impossibility of meeting the enterprise's many financial obligations. In 1995 the government levied a value-added tax on produce, which put the kolkhoz in debt. The enterprise was also being taxed a rate per worker to support the local police force, but since half the official workforce was inactive, he saw this levy as senseless. The kolkhoz was about 440,000 rubles in debt to the state and owed workers about 400,000 rubles in back salaries, but the director said the workers themselves actually carried this debt, because, as owners of the shares (worthless as they were), it was their kolkhoz. Basically, he said, the workers were too far in debt to pay themselves. The only workers who got an actual cash salary were the milkmaids, because the milking of cows simply could not be neglected and no one particularly wanted the job. Thus, to keep these milkers working, he paid them 50% of their salary in cash and the rest in kind. The director

complained that he actually had competition for good workers from private farmers, because when they needed assistance, even if only temporarily, they could pay cash wages since they were taking produce directly to market.

The director concluded his critical assessment by saying that a pure kolkhoz form could no longer be successful. This sounded like rhetoric from ten years earlier, but apparently he was the first enterprising young director to come along in Paigusovo and say this. He planned to put the old kolkhoz into bankruptcy proceedings and simultaneously start a new enterprise that would employ a fraction of the workers. The rest, he said, should take their land and go, but they had the option of renting the land back to the kolkhoz if they did not want to work it themselves.

The situation for the remnant sovkhoz in Snezhnoe was similarly bleak. In 1993, it was re-registered under the name 'Agricultural Enterprise Sovkhoz Anadyrskii' (*sel'skokhoziaistvannoe predpriiatie sovkhoz Anadyrskii*), thus actually keeping the word 'sovkhoz' as part of its official name. The reindeer herder and brigade leader who had attempted to break away and form an independent herding enterprise took over as director of the remnant sovkhoz and has remained in that position until the time of this writing. In spite of the stability in leadership, the enterprise has floundered. As in Paigusovo, many sovkhoz employees remained on the official payroll but did little or no actual work for the sovkhoz. Indeed, there seemed to be little work to be done, since production in the primary branch, reindeer herding, was all but halted by the mid-1990s, due to a cataclysmic crash in the reindeer population (a phenomenon occurring throughout Chukotka at the time; see Gray 2000). Other sub-branches of the enterprise, such as its five fishing camps, seemed to be manned more for subsistence than for production purposes. Poaching of fish and game became more common (and more tolerated) as sovkhoz employees sought ways to be compensated for their long-delayed salaries.

As productive activity in the village plummeted, the director actually spent more time in the regional capital, negotiating deals for loans and subsidies under a variety of federal support programmes, many of which were targeted to northern indigenous peoples (the director himself is Chukchi). Occasionally he sent back shipments of staple goods for his employees, who could take them on credit from the sovkhoz or barter buckets of berries or pine nuts for them. Gathering now became the primary productive activity of many sovkhoz employees, particularly women. Many villagers accused the director of profiteering on their misfortune: they noted that he wore fine clothes and lived in a nice apartment in the regional capital (facts I verified on my own visits to him there), while the 'staple foods' he sent them were hardly adequate for survival (my own inspection of the tiny sovkhoz trading

post verified that the offerings were heavier on cakes and chocolate bars than on the flour, rice, oil, and macaroni that villagers desperately sought). Eventually, the Chukotka regional administration intervened in the fate of all remaining sovkhozy in Chukotka by persuading directors—Snezhnoe's included—to sign over their enterprises to municipal property, once again to be centrally managed by the district administration (see Gray 2001).

Individual Strategies

In the context of this dissolution of the collective enterprise that had been the source of stability throughout their lives, several families in each village have pursued creative strategies to support themselves independently of the failing remnant kolkhoz or sovkhoz. In some cases they survive by determined individualism, accumulating resources about themselves, even at times appropriating formerly collective resources to their private use. In other cases they apply collective, cooperative practices as they engage in mutual aid, which is often kin based. Yet both individualists and collectivists form collaborative links that run throughout the community.

In Paigusovo, one of the newer duplexes is shared, ironically, by two families who pursue different strategies—one more individualist, one more collectivist. I found it somehow symbolic that they nevertheless collaborated to construct a communal bathhouse between their two adjoining yards; I saw this as indicative of the overall collective atmosphere that still prevails in the village (another indication is the cooperative pasturing of privately owned cows in a collective herd). On one side of the duplex is Zoia, with her husband and teenage son. On the other side are Angelina and Leonid, the village mayor, with Angelina's aging mother.

Zoia was formerly employed as the kolkhoz economist but left in 1994 when the kolkhoz stopped paying cash salaries. After an experimental foray into private enterprise (a sewing and farming company that had been formed by a group of village women), she took all of her property and land shares out of the kolkhoz and took up farming full-time. The almost obsessive energy with which Zoia pursued farming was readily apparent: even as we talked, she processed and canned two dozen jars of freshly harvested tomatoes. She described herself and her family members as running constantly, like squirrels on a treadmill, but never managing to get ahead. Still, she said she pursued farming because she loved it, particularly the independence of it. Zoia's family farmed a total of 16.6 hectares, including land from the couple's parents and 8 hectares rented from the district. She sometimes hired labour on a short-term basis to help with ploughing or harvesting her fields of cabbages, potatoes, hay, and grains. The family had managed to purchase a truck, a tractor, and a potato harvester and had built two big

garages plus a large greenhouse. Zoia had plans to build a warehouse for storing cabbages over the winter so they could bring a higher price in the spring. She was financing these improvements with loans, but not conventionally through banks. She described obtaining a bank loan as too slow a process to benefit the farmer, who often needed money fast as a stop-gap between a bad harvest in the fall and the spring planting. Thus she had negotiated loans informally with other local entrepreneurs.

Zoia's neighbours, Angelina and Leonid, also engaged in farming, but they did so on what they called an 'amateur' basis, since they each kept day jobs that paid regular salaries. The land they worked was tiny in comparison with Zoia's: only 2.9 hectares in all. Nevertheless, the produce from these small plots was a significant source of annual income for them. While their salaries totalled about 2,500 rubles a month, they earned about 14,000 rubles in one month of peddling cabbages in the district centre. Besides these plots of farmland, every inch of their adjacent household plot was planted with a wide variety of vegetables and fruit trees, and in the back they kept a cow, a sow with piglets, and several chickens. Angelina and Leonid owned no farming equipment, but Leonid's sister and her husband owned a tractor with a potato harvester and a hay baler. The two families cooperatively worked to plough and harvest each other's fields and in fact formed a small collective during the harvest period, even sharing meals together. Angelina and Leonid's household expanded during this time: they were joined by their son and his wife, who came down from school in Ioshkar-Ola to help with the farm labour, as well as by Leonid's sister, who collaborated with Angelina's mother to prepare meals for the crew. Angelina said that most of the proceeds from the sale of farm produce went to their son and his wife, and that she and Leonid probably would not bother with the farming except for them.

Similar patterns of strategies can be found in Snezhnoe, with perhaps a single significant difference. In Paigusovo, with infrastructure intact and accessible markets nearby, people are working, individually or cooperatively, to produce. In Snezhnoe, remotely located and inadequately serviced, people are working, individually and cooperatively, merely to survive. Two families in Snezhnoe similarly represent an individualist versus a collectivist strategy. Another layer of complexity is involved, however, because ethnic differences in the composition of the families reveal some of the differences in opportunity structures available to indigenous residents versus Russian and Ukrainian incomer residents. One of the families is headed by Valentin, the Ukrainian deputy sovkhoz director, who 'privatised' for himself the sovkhoz milk separator. The other is a large, extended family of Chukchi reindeer herders represented in the village by Petya and his siblings.

Over the course of several years, I was able to observe the progress Valentin and his family—a wife and three children—made in transforming their small apartment, which was part of an eight-unit complex, into a farmstead in the very centre of the village. Little by little, he expanded the edges of his domain to occupy space farther into the street on the three sides available to him (his apartment was situated at one end of the building complex). He began by acquiring the neighbouring apartment, thus expanding his two rooms into four. Onto the front of this he constructed a cow stall, a large storage room, a chicken house, and a refrigeration unit dug deep into the permafrost. To one side he added on a greenhouse. Valentin was fortunate in that heating pipes ran past his house, so he was able to add running water to his farmstead by jury-rigging pipes appropriated from a sovkhoz cattle barn, whose optimistically initiated construction had been abandoned shortly after the collapse of the Soviet Union. When he was not at work carving out his farmstead, Valentin and his sons would hunt and fish while his wife and daughter went out gathering in the nearby tundra. Thus, by producing their own vegetables, dairy products, and eggs and supplementing them with fish, game, and wild plant resources, the household was becoming uncannily self-sufficient as well as oddly incongruent in its tundra conditions.

Petya was a young bachelor employed by the sovkhoz as a veterinary technician. His family included two brothers and three sisters, eight nieces and nephews, and an aging mother who lived in the tundra with the dwindling reindeer herd. The six siblings moved back and forth between the tundra reindeer camp and the village, but the entire family was rarely, if ever, all gathered in one or the other location at the same time. They sent resources back and forth to one another whenever transportation was available. Petya was expressly critical of Valentin, saying that his farmstead was thriving at the expense of the remaining villagers. He identified an array of raw materials that had gone into Valentin's household directly from the formerly common resources of the sovkhoz.

For their part, Petya and his family, too, were trying to accumulate resources and build up a homestead in the village, but they were pursuing this cooperatively through extended kin networks as well as neighbourly networks in the village. The family had managed to acquire and privatise two adjoining apartments in one of the 16-unit blocks, and Petya spent much of his time working to renovate the apartments. He wanted them to be a comfortable home for his nieces and nephews, and he hoped to convince his mother to leave the tundra and come settle in the apartment. Like Valentin, Petya scavenged materials where he could, including from the abandoned sovkhoz cow barn. Many of my conversations with Petya took place as he slowly but systematically disassembled the wooden interior structure of the

barn to obtain firewood and construction materials. Unlike Valentin, Petya visibly suffered from an internal moral conflict as he worked. He described a sense of shame at being reduced to activities that he would have described as hooliganism a few years earlier, and he routinely left the day's load of scavenged wood in the barn until nightfall, when he could carry it home without attracting much attention.

Petya desperately wished to free himself from what felt to him like debt peonage to the sovkhoz director, whom he increasingly grew to despise. He talked of building a greenhouse, although he admitted he knew nothing about growing vegetables. He also dreamed of becoming an independent hunter-trapper, but he had no means of obtaining a rifle and bullets, which required not only cash but also a license. He felt it was within the sovkhoz director's power to help him make that transition, so he stayed with the sovkhoz in the hope that, through persistent negotiation, he could obtain the director's help in achieving his goals. He also knew that, even as an independent hunter, he would probably remain dependent on the director, with his connections to the city, in order to market his products.

Conclusion: The Trial of the *-isms*

I am indebted to my colleague Steven Reyna for providing me with a metaphor that I find to be an excellent heuristic device for provoking my thinking about the postsocialist predicament in Russia. Reyna suggested that, for the sake of argument, we might look at the current situation in postsocialist Russia in this way: Socialism has died (or was it killed? he provocatively asks), and capitalism has moved in to take over. Now capitalism—and its attendant neo-liberal theory—is on trial and must prove that it is doing a better job than socialism did. Because so much of our group's research at MPISA has shown the difficulties people are experiencing in postsocialist societies, we might be accused of trying to declare capitalism guilty of not providing for the social welfare of the former subjects of socialism. Indeed, discussions of the postsocialist situation all too often seem to degenerate into a stand-off between the proponents of capitalism and the defenders of socialism, with each side claiming its ideological package to be superior to the other's. To suggest that socialism might have been 'killed' is of course to challenge the popular Western belief that it died a 'natural death' because it was a flawed organism to begin with. Coupled with evidence of things gone from bad to worse in parts of the postsocialist world (with 'wild capitalism' blamed for it by some), this leaves room to argue that the merits of the socialist system were not fully appreciated, its well-known failures notwithstanding.

We might say that *both* socialism and capitalism remain, in a sense, on trial, and that in fact this is truly the 'trial of the century'. Proponents of each system have long made claims to the moral high ground. Because of historical shifts in power relations, capitalism's proponents acquired the possibility to fulfil their long-awaited desire to elbow socialism aside, and from their perspective, justice has now been served. But does the evidence so far show that capitalism is doing better in the postsocialist world?

Capitalism v. Socialism may be the trial of the twentieth century, but is it (or should it be) the trial of the twenty-first century? As Stephen Gudeman (2001: 149) points out, 'some mischief has been perpetuated by measuring one against the other, that is, seeing socialism as economically "inefficient" and the market economy as immoral and alienating'. My understanding of the project of this group of researchers at MPISA is that it has been designed to gather hard evidence about the current conditions of people's lives under postsocialism from locations rarely visited by those who figure most prominently in the trial of *Capitalism v. Socialism.* However, as someone who has spent time in such locations, I would argue that the whole enterprise of opposing capitalism and socialism is inherently flawed and should be abandoned for a different project, one that I will describe shortly. But why do I advocate for a mistrial?

First, neither capitalism nor socialism exists in any pure form (thus the invention of the phrase 'actually existing socialism', which has been countered with 'actually existing capitalism'). As Chris Hann argues in the introduction to this volume, and as many of the other chapters show, socialism varied considerably in practice, from situations like that in Poland, where collectivisation was never implemented, to those in East Germany, where title to collectivised land was retained, and Russia, where the state never relinquished title to land. Capitalism is equally variable, and the 'free hand of the market' is rarely as free as the proponents of a neoclassical model might wish—witness the heavy government subsidisation of agriculture in the United States. No single political-economic system is ever purely socialist or purely capitalist; there is always some degree of mixture.

Second, to the extent that something resembling the ideological concept of socialism or capitalism *does* exist 'on the ground', one cannot possibly argue wholesale that one system is good/better/right while the other is bad/worse/wrong. In any context where an attempt has been made to apply either capitalism or socialism, there will always be a trade-off between positive and negative outcomes *from the perspective of those experiencing the system.* I add the emphasis here because this is precisely the project I advocate as a social anthropologist: to investigate the lived experiences of human beings. How socialism or capitalism fare in the light of scrutiny

depends ultimately on the context of that lived experience, and not on aggregate figures. For example, it might be a fair assessment to say that, in general, residents of the village of Paigusovo are faring worse under the attempt to apply a capitalist model in Russia than are residents of Ioshkar-Ola, the capital of Marii El. Not only are Paigusovo residents worse off in comparison with Ioshkar-Ola residents, but the whole village is doing worse today than during the Soviet period. So in one sense, one could say that capitalism has not brought benefits to Paigusovo. Within Paigusovo, however, some residents are certainly faring better under current conditions than others, and a very few have become quite successful economically. Furthermore, any single resident of Paigusovo is likely to say that some aspects of her or his life have improved under current conditions, and some have gotten worse.

What complicates matters here is the tendency of former Soviet citizens to wax nostalgic about how much better things were under socialism, which seemingly provides evidence for the proponents of socialism that their system was *good.* Yet those same Soviet citizens, having spent one breath complaining about what was lost in the turn away from socialism, will in the next breath say they feel that their lives have improved overall in the last ten years. Have their lives improved because of capitalism or because of their own adaptiveness and ingenuity, regardless of the system in which they find themselves? Are they nostalgic for socialism because it was better or because it was what they had known their whole lives, and one always looks fondly upon the familiar? If they look fondly upon a system that was flawed, should we dismiss their positive reflections as 'mere' nostalgia, or should we consider the possibility that certain aspects of that system might be worth developing in the new context—perhaps, as Gudeman (2001:155) says, 'carrying out community values of distribution as opposed to creating productivities'? In Paigusovo and Snezhnoe, socialism was the only system the village residents knew, and they made it work for themselves. They grew accustomed to it, they understood it, and therefore they were traumatised when it disappeared. People in the process of living their daily lives do not much care whether they are living under socialism or capitalism, so long as they can find a way to make their lives work.

Another important lesson to learn from the villagers of Paigusovo and Snezhnoe is that the material, the quantifiable, is not always the absolute measure of their satisfaction. Even when people are struggling harder than they did in the socialist period to make a living, they sometimes express satisfaction, even excitement, over the character their lives have taken on. They might travel more, they might meet a wider variety of people, they might even host a foreign ethnographer in their homes—these are things that add a great deal of interest to their lives, which they value highly.

The ethnographic material I have gathered in Snezhnoe and Paigusovo provides an indictment of systems of power in general. I prefer to treat capitalism and socialism together as one variable, jointly representing the effects of any huge, overarching system that can, by imposing a model that ignores local practices, wreak havoc on the lives of some subjects while enriching the lives of others and offering to most a mixed bag of benefits and detriments. Being distracted by the ideological debate surrounding socialism and capitalism draws attention away from the concrete realities of people living under either socialist or capitalist systems.

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Chapter 11

Between Neo-Liberalism and Dirigisme Approaches to Reindeer Herding in Yamal and Sakha

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The countries and regions of the former Soviet bloc have pursued a variety of approaches in dealing with their socialist heritage and promoting development. In this chapter we address regional variation in Siberia, where we can observe the whole range of approaches to postsocialist development, from strong forms of dirigisme to neo-liberalism. Siberia has witnessed both privatisation and the renationalisation of enterprises. Indigenous lifestyles are close to extinction, but retribalisation is also observable. In what follows, we investigate the parameters that determine success in economic and social transformation and identify the factors that prevent the simple transfer of a development model from one region to another.

Such contrasts confirm the importance of former Russian president Boris Yeltsin's decision to give regions as much independence as they could afford to take (RFE/RL 1993). The consequence was that different regions took completely different 'pathways to reform' (Kasten, ed., 2002). Siberia can be seen as a laboratory in which all the main development models of the postsocialist world can be researched within basically similar settings. These are conditioned for the whole of Siberia by a single federal state with a single constitution, a common past within the Soviet Union, similar infrastructural problems of transportation and supply, similar climatic conditions, and similar problems of native-incomer relations.

The basis for this chapter is our fieldwork from the summer of 2000 to the summer of 2001 in two regions of this Siberian laboratory: the Yamal Nentsy Autonomous Okrug (YNAO) in north-western Siberia (Stammler) and the Republic of Sakha in eastern Siberia (Ventsel).[1] Both regions are rich in natural resources, Yamal being the number one gas extracting and

[1] 'Okrug' is the term for the administrative unit, similar to a German 'Bundesland'. However, in the upper chamber of the Moscow federal parliament and in most other spheres of Russian politics, Yamal Okrug and the Sakha Republic are considered so-called equal subjects of the Russian Federation.

Sakha the number one diamond extracting region in Russia. The native population in both regions counts for no more than 5% to 6% of the population, the majority being Russian incomers, along with 30% Sakha (Yakut) in Sakha Republic.

In our two field sites, the Yamal Peninsula (northern YNAO) and the Anabar region (north-western Sakha; see map), the native populations are Nentsy and Dolgan reindeer herders and hunters, respectively. Like the rest of the indigenous minorities of the Russian Federation, they are classified as *malochislennye narody Severa, Sibiri i dal'nego vostoka* ('numerically small peoples of the North, Siberia, and the Far East'). This status was given to minority groups of up to 30,000 members. It guaranteed special privileges such as free transportation in some regions and the possibility of studying at a university without being required to take entrance examinations. The Soviet policy of strictly categorised 'national' identities was, in the case of indigenous peoples, paternalistic, because these groups were seen as backward and unable to be 'civilised' without outside help. This policy began in the early 1920s for 20 to 30 such minority groups (Slezkine 1994). According to the new law on Guarantees of Rights of Native Small-Numbered Peoples (O garantiiakh 1999), 44 ethnic groups are classified as numerically small peoples. With the new law, the maximum size of these ethnic groups was raised to 50,000.

According to Russian legislation, reindeer herding, hunting, gathering, and fishing are classified as *traditsionnaia khoziaistvennaia deiatel'nost'*, traditional economic forms for the indigenous population (O garantiiakh 1999), or native economies. These types of economic activities among the Dolgan and the Nentsy, with their differences and similarities in development, are the focus of our analysis in this chapter. For indigenous people, as for the rest of the population, the crucial factors determining post-Soviet developments can be traced back to Soviet practices, which also predetermined the consequences of the collapse of the planned economy. Various ways in which privatisation has been carried out are characterised by different property regimes and entitlements. These factors together laid the ground for the development of a market economy. We investigate how the general conditions we have mentioned influenced the concrete outcomes of 'the transition' for the local population. Our analysis of the combinations of the various elements in the regions enables us to extrapolate two general approaches to native economies, which we then assess with relevance to two models of economic development: neo-liberal capitalism and the neo-Stalinist, or dirigiste, planned economy.

Neo-liberalism and dirigisme present two extremes in terms of state involvement in the economy. Anthropologists have argued against such models and have developed alternatives such as 'the domestic mode of production' (Donham 1981; Sahlins 1972). We find that despite their insufficiencies, the neo-liberal and dirigiste models serve as tools to work with, even for anthropologists of Siberia. We understand models like these as Weberian 'ideal types' (Weber 1969: 190–91)—that is, they are not constructed to be matched by reality but stand as ideals, forming frameworks that help us understand reality or investigate how closely reality approaches one or the other ideal type. In our concrete cases, neo-liberalism and dirigisme serve as opposite poles, between which lie a whole range of economic developments that combine elements of each.

On the basis of our fieldwork, we believe that economic actors on the ground—the reindeer herders and hunters themselves—modify the models to their advantage, shifting them to a middle ground. That is, in a neo-liberal economy, people support state structures and try to benefit from them, whereas in a more dirigiste economy, people find niches in which to enter

the market in spite of a general plan made by the state. In the tradition of Caroline Humphrey (1998), we show that centrally planned models are modified by lived realities at the place of their implementation. Even though the 'total social institution' of the *kolkhoz* or *sovkhoz,* which formed the basis of Humphrey's analysis, has either ceased to exist or been modified, people in our field sites still deal with 'manipulable resources' in the evolving market economy (Humphrey 1998: 226, 435). People are still appropriating resources owned by the state for their individual needs, and through such actions, models, too, become 'manipulable'.

Reindeer Herding in Yamal and Sakha during the Soviet Period

The history of large-scale reindeer herding in Russia is shorter than one might assume. According to Igor Krupnik (1993: 160–84), the herding of large herds of domestic reindeer dates back only to the seventeenth century. Before that, the main occupation in Siberia was hunting wild reindeer and gathering. The herding of reindeer for purposes of transportation, however, dates farther back. Most authors (e.g., Ingold 1980: 104ff.; Khomitch 1995: 51; Krupnik 1993: 161) support the interpretation of Glafira Vasilevich and Maksim Levin (1950: 77–81), who saw reindeer herding as having originated in the Sayan Mountains in southern Siberia and in the region around Lake Baikal. Two Chinese sources even report people 'using reindeer like horses' north of Lake Baikal as early as the sixth and seventh centuries C.E. They were using the deer to pull 'cars' (wagons) for transport.[2]

In the Soviet period, the organisation of reindeer herding changed radically. Reindeer herding was the object of planning and control from the beginning of the socialist state, and even before collectivisation there were plans to reorganise the whole branch and make it more efficient. Until the mid-1920s, the dominant view was that reindeer were the wealth of the Nordic people and not a state possession. The aim of the reorganisation was, first, to increase the living standards of the local people and, after that, if possible, to produce meat for the wider population. The approach of Sergei Kertselli and V. Khudadov (1919: 9, 11) is representative of the activism and idealism of the revolution before collectivisation. It persisted as the dominant approach in the first years of the 'Committee of the North' of the Soviet Union, founded in 1924. This approach was later called the 'conservative

[2] In the Chinese of the time there was no word for 'sled', so they could have meant to say that these people were already using sleds. This would lead to the assumption that sledge-driving with reindeer preceded even the riding of reindeer. We are grateful to Ingo Nentwig for the translation of these Chinese sources: the empire chronicle of the state of Liang, 502–57, chapter 48, and the *Xing Tang Shu,* the second chronicle of the Tang Dynasty, 618–907, chapter 217. Both sources are referred to in Lü 1981: 139.

approach', in opposition to that of the 'progressives'. The conservative concept has been analysed as having been similar to the concept on which North American Indian reservations were based (Vakhtin 1998: 82–85).

The progressives, who had won the power struggle against the conservatives by the end of the 1920s, opted for total incorporation of native economies and the 'sovietisation' of all people, no matter what their ethnic affiliation. The key concepts of state planners from the 1930s onwards were collectivisation—later sovietisation—of property and making the northern peoples good Soviet citizens. Ideologically, the stratification of reindeer herders was unacceptable to the new communist powers, who worked out a programme for turning native reindeer herding, fishing, and hunting into an element of the socialist economy. The ideology was that 'only the collectivisation of reindeer herding could save the masses of the poor from misery and ruin'. This was to be done by 'overcoming the natural character of reindeer herding' (Kopylova 1960: 39) and making it a commodity suitable for integration into the market. Concretely, these goals were to be achieved by establishing reindeer *sovkhozy*. However, the communists recognised that everything had to be done carefully and followed a step-by-step model.

Generally, communist state officials took the restructuring and controlling of the tundra economy very seriously. The goal was to help 'backward' *tundroviki* and bring them closer to civilisation.[3] In most cases the people who organised the process of 'enlightening and helping' the natives seriously believed, like Kertselli and Khudadov (1919), that this was necessary and were full of good intentions and constructive suggestions. During Stalinism and afterwards, breaking old 'backward' structures and traditions meant, for officials, giving people a new life and declaring the dawn of a new era. Civilising and enlightening rhetoric is found in many regions where peoples of the North live, but the consequences of this ideology differed between the regions.

The original main incentive for reorganising reindeer kolkhozy into sovkhozy was the Soviets' will to implement the ideology of sedentarisation among nomads. Like the collectivisation of herds and households, the sedentarisation campaign began with the poor among the natives, especially those with few or no private reindeer (Petrova and Khariutshi 1999: 125). Although we agree that the process of Soviet state formation, with its distinctive ideology, was a particular case, the incorporation of nomads into a state structure followed a pattern similar to that in many other parts of the world. Daniel Bradburd (1996), applying insights developed by Charles Tilly, shows that attempts to sedentarise pastoralists, limiting their autonomy and

[3] *Tundroviki* is a Russian term used for people living predominantly in the tundra, whether they are reindeer herders, hunters, or fishers.

transforming them into part of a wage labour force, belong to a common pattern of state formation. With its aim of incorporating reindeer herders into a system of tight state control, the Soviet Union was no exception.

There was a considerable time lag between the rise of reform ideas and their implementation in the Soviet Union, so collective reindeer herding became state reindeer breeding only in the 1950s. The basic unit of production became the so-called brigade, usually consisting of several families working together year-round. These brigades were organised first in collective enterprises, or kolkhozy, and from the 1960s onwards in state enterprises, or sovkhozy. The kinship principle in the brigades, prevalent not only among reindeer herders but also among Central Asian pastoralists (Khazanov 1994), was officially abandoned, but it persisted informally and is now becoming more important again.

From the beginning of sovietisation, the trend was towards concentrating herds and brigades into larger units (*ukrupnenie*), because from a short-term, industrialist point of view, 'the larger the size of the herds ... the higher the ratio of females, [and] the fewer non-productive losses' (Kopylova 1960: 44). In other words, more meat could be produced with large herds. There was, thus, a conflict between native models of reindeer herding, which aimed at satisfying the basic needs of subsistence, and state models, which aimed at meat production. Those conflicts could be observed even in regions outside the Soviet Union, as Robert Paine (1996: 125–28) described for Scandinavia. There, the state modified reindeer herding to 'the way it should be', according to industrial models.

In many Siberian regions, there were no large herds before collectivisation, and the natives had to adapt to the new model (Fondahl 1995; Ssorin-Chaikov 1998). With the establishment of sovkhozy, kolkhoz members, who at least on paper owned one part of the whole enterprise, became state workers just like those in any other Soviet industry. The formerly collectively owned deer now became state-owned deer. This brought the herders a considerable loss of independence but also an increase in state support. They became entitled to a pension after a certain age, and they received health insurance and salary bonuses for their years of work (*nadbavki na vyslugu let*) (Petrova and Kharjutshi 1999: 128). From the 1960s onwards, the sovkhozy controlled all aspects of life in the villages and the tundra. They were 'total social institutions' (Humphrey 1995: 7), maintaining the village with their shops, bakery, club, sauna, kindergarten, boarding school, transportation equipment, construction department, and so on. People became accustomed to this social security, so that entitlements today are one of the main reasons most of them want to stay in touch with the sovkhozy. They are also a source of widespread nostalgia for the 'good old times' (Hann 1994, 2001).

Sovkhozy in the Russian North were designed as large, diversified state agricultural enterprises in which reindeer herding was only one branch among other economic activities such as hunting, fishing, and cattle and polar fox breeding. Although the structure of enterprises, with all their diverse departments, was the same all over the Soviet Union (and is even now, to a certain extent), below this official categorisation there was considerable variety. The sovkhoz approach was to create discrete categories of employment that could be organised better within the institutional structure. The dilemma in such a unified structure of job categories is how to counter regional differences. For example, in western Siberia the population of wild reindeer has sharply declined, so that making a living from hunting is no longer possible, whereas in Anabar in the Republic of Sakha, there are still large herds of wild reindeer, which makes hunting an efficient economic activity. What should a registered hunter do when there are no wild reindeer to hunt, as is the case in Yamal? Again, ethnographic detail provides us with a better understanding of regional differences. The combination of all branches of the economy within one family production unit, the household, was torn apart by the Soviets through the creation of specialised reindeer herding brigades, hunting brigades, and fishing brigades (so far as we know, there were no 'gathering brigades'; compare the contributions by Ziker and King in this volume on incorporating traditional economies into socialist agriculture in other regions).

There was also a reorganisation of territories (*zemleustroistvo*)—namely, reindeer pastures—and a reorganisation of grazing practices (Sannikov 2002: 34). Research teams from Moscow came to assess the carrying capacities (*oleneemkost'*) of pastures and were charged to design ideal migration routes for the reindeer herds. Overlong routes were considered to be inefficient. Besides *zemleustroistvo*, so-called mechanisation also changed the reindeer herders' way of life. Whereas in cattle or sheep breeding, mechanisation meant, among other things, the building of large stable complexes and the fencing of pastures, in reindeer herding it was understood as introducing snowmobiles, motor vehicles, and aeroplane assistance. Since Pertti Pelto's work (Pelto and Ludger 1987), it has been widely recognised that the use of new means of transportation among reindeer herders significantly changed their mobility and patterns of migration. Aeroplanes and helicopters were used for medical purposes, to hunt wolves, and to bring people and supplies to the brigades (Liely 1979: 404–9).

To describe the condition of the brigade, both reindeer and people, a list of marks (*koefitsenty*) called the 'standard' was created. Through a complicated mathematical procedure, a main evaluation mark for the brigade was calculated. The mark was the main factor in the brigade's so-called

passport. The reindeer breeding passport for the entire enterprise consisted of the sum of all brigade passports. These documents considered not only the condition of the reindeer and pastures but also the property of the reindeer herders and the supplies given to them by the enterprise, because the work conditions of individual herders influenced their output as a whole. The control documentation included tables listing the numbers of binoculars, radios, lassos, rifles, snowmobiles, and even fur trousers, winter and summer boots, teapots, plates, and fishing nets.

The people who planned and filled out these tables were sympathetic to the herders. In their view, the proportions of privately purchased and state-supplied equipment were significant for the herders' morale. The more the enterprise could supply, the less the workers had to spend of their own income to buy necessary tools and clothing, and the better they could work. This was one reason why every single spoon had to be counted. Discovering the proportion of privately owned and state-supplied tools and clothing was also important for determining whether or not state subsidies for reindeer herders were being used by the state farm administration for their intended purposes (D. I. Syrovatskii, personal communication with Ventsel, 2001). As far as everyday equipment was concerned, people may have been less interested in formally owning such items than in having the chance to use them and to get replacements for free. In some collective enterprises, this is still the practise, and Khanty reindeer herders from Yamal Okrug reported that it was very convenient to get supplied with new stoves every few years and to get paid for producing covers for *chum,* nomadic reindeer herder tents.[4] After a certain period, these items are written off by the sovkhoz, and people can do whatever they want with them for their private purposes, if their condition allows further use.

All of these measures were implemented to transform reindeer herding into an agricultural industry and incorporate it into an all-Soviet, state-planned economy. The effort had measurable success in terms of reorganising labour and increasing the size of the herds. Whereas at the beginning of the twentieth century, the number of domestic reindeer in Russia was around 1.5 million (Syroechkovski 2000: 28), from the 1950s onwards, it was always above 2 million (Syroechkovski 2000: 26, using government data). Although official documentation may not reflect the true figures, it points to the general tendency, which confirms that the Soviet industrialisation of reindeer herding resulted in artificially large herds, the production of which

[4] The Khanty are an indigenous minority who speak a Finno-Ugric language and are mostly occupied with fishing and hunting. Only in the polar Ural Mountains did they take over the herding of large reindeer herds from the Nentsy. Stammler visited the Khanty during a short field trip in March 2001.

went beyond the subsistence needs of their native breeders. The surplus made it possible to incorporate reindeer herding into the Soviet economy.

Many features of the Soviet concept remained popular even after the demise of the Soviet Union. Recent publications such as Syrovatskii 2000 show how people today largely follow this Soviet school by proposing a continuation of the Soviet model in post-Soviet times. The changes they suggest are relatively slight, such as distributing video recorders in the tundra and viewing the *chum rabotnitsa,* or 'professional housewives', not only as part of the labour force but also as the 'good spirit' of the brigade.[5]

Regional Differences

'In Yamal people always followed the reindeer, but in Sakha the reindeer followed the people', said Vassilii Vinokurov in an interview in the summer of 2000. This statement has never been tested scientifically, and nomadic reindeer herding has not been classified as a form of 'herd following'. Indeed, it is disputed in anthropology whether reindeer hunters really do follow the herds (Burch 1991). However, differences between Yamal and Sakha in terms of the conditions and sizes of their herds under a unified Soviet model are not disputed and are documented by official statistics.

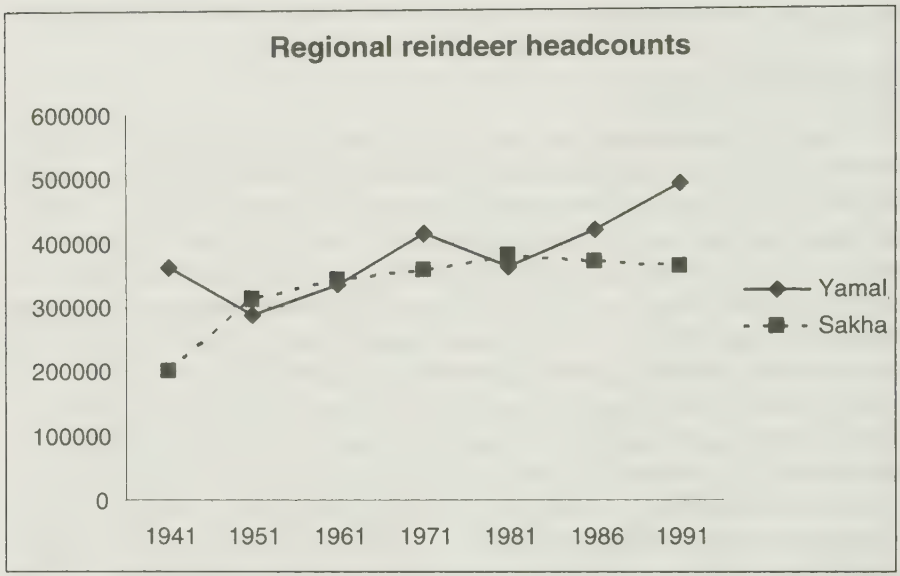
The data for Sakha in Figure 11.1 indicate that the Soviet reforms in reindeer breeding brought about the desired results —namely, an increase in reindeer and, for several decades, the ongoing possibility of industrial meat extraction beyond the subsistence needs of the natives. The figures for Yamal indicate that the Soviets had more difficulty implementing their model there and that reindeer numbers must have been influenced by different factors. One of these was meat production for the front during the Second World War (YNNO 1965: 164). The fluctuation in herd numbers indicates that in Yamal, neither sovietisation and state control nor sedentarisation was achieved as completely as they should have been according to the planners. Less strict control towards the end of the Soviet period facilitated an increase in herd numbers, predominantly in privately owned ones, as we show later.

In Sakha, as a consequence of Soviet policy, the lives of the native people were reorganised and became ever more centralised. Private ownership of reindeer was already almost completely forbidden before the Second World War. The collectivised reindeer were given to the collective farm and divided among the brigades. During the Soviet period, only a small number

[5] *Chum rabotnitsa* is a job category created by the sovkhozy to encompass all work done by the wife of a reindeer herder. She receives a regular salary and all social services such as health insurance and a pension from the sovkhoz.

of privately owned reindeer (according to Ventsel's informants, 50–100 head at different times) were allowed (Fig. 11.2). These reindeer grazed together with the collective's animals. To compensate for the loss of 'working capacity', reindeer herders were allowed to use as many kolkhoz (and later sovkhoz) reindeer as they wished.

Figure 11.1

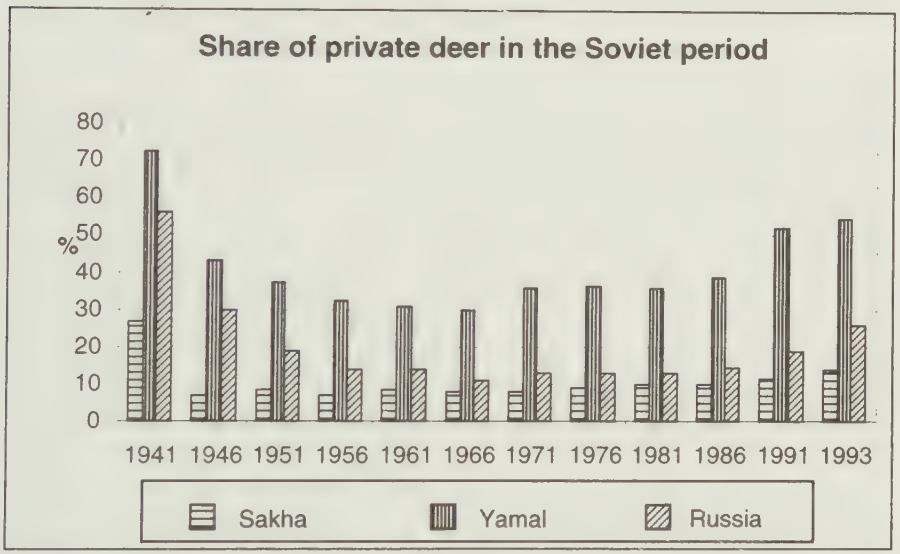


In Yamal, private ownership of reindeer was more widespread, although against ideology. Figure 11.2 indicates that the very process of collectivisation was carried out later in Yamal than in Sakha. The remaining private herds had a semi-legal status. Sovkhoz workers recall that in the 1960s, private herds larger than 100 animals were tolerated in some cases because the performance of the state herds was too poor to provide everybody with enough 'transport' deer to move the households and enough meat to fulfil the state plan.[6] This further confirms our assumption that sovietisation of reindeer herding was less complete in Yamal than in Sakha. After the transition from kolkhozy to sovkhozy in Yamal, the percentage of privately controlled deer remained comparably high—approximately 30%—and it always remained well above the Russian average and the share in Sakha. The sovk-

[6] These recollections were expressed in conversations in 2000 and 2001. People still prefer to keep such statements anonymous.

hozy in Yamal paid herders cash for the use of private animals for meat or transportation. Thus, reindeer herders accumulated a considerable amount of the most significant type of capitalist individual private property, the type so condemned by the centrally imposed ideology: cash held in bank accounts. Such a practice was not exceptional in Soviet agriculture. Similar semi-legal transactions, in which the management of a kolkhoz bought produce from workers' private plots to fulfil the plan, were first described by Humphrey for Buryatia (Humphrey 1998: 211, 215, 217, 188ff.).

Figure 11.2



One remarkable difference between the Anabar district of Sakha and the Yamal Peninsula is the lack of vertical polarisation along ethnic lines in the state farm structures. In the village of Uurung Khaia in Sakha, most workers in management positions were locals just like the tundroviki.[7] The directors during the in Soviet period and afterwards were local people who grew up on the tundra, went off to receive a professional education, returned to their home village, and, after working in the state farm, rose to become part of its management. Of course they were Communist Party members. Many of them were even 'Heroes of Socialist Labour', 'Honoured Agricultural

[7] Uurung Khaia is a Dolgan village in the Anabar district on the coast of the Arctic Ocean, with a population of around 1,200.

Workers', and holders of the 'Order of Labour's Red Flag'. These titles were received for hard work in socialist agriculture, and their holders were and still are highly respected. Moreover, the Communist Party and local administration positions in Uurung Khaia were filled not with incomers but with well-known local persons, who were more respected and better incorporated into the local value system than was the case in Yamal. There, directors were indeed incomers, though not newcomers. Most of them were second-generation Russians from families living in the North, and they were fully acknowledged by the indigenous tundra dwellers. Nevertheless, in Sakha, the fact that directors were local people may have made it easier for the northern population to identify with the state structures and be loyal to them.

In Sakha, where locals controlled the scene, Soviet restructuring of native economies was more thorough than it was in Yamal, where the leaders were mostly Russians. One explanation might be that the people of Sakha had always, even in the pre-Soviet period, adapted themselves to the colonial system and adopted its administrative structures (Forsyth 1992: 164, 259, 319, 380; Stephan 1994: 24). People accepted the planned economy, and it was an honour to fulfil the plan before deadline or to give the state more produce than planned. One informant, a brigadier in the third reindeer brigade from Uurung Khaia, was proud that the state farm's successor enterprise carried the name of his uncle, Ilya Spiridonov, the first Hero of Socialist Labour to over-fulfil the plan for collecting polar fox furs. Older reindeer herders recalled with pride the old days when they were winners of socialist competitions and received trips to the Black Sea coast or the Baltic republics as prizes.

Our comparison of the Soviet period in Yamal and Sakha reveals some key differences between the two regions. Whereas Sakha saw a thorough reorganisation of its native economy, with heavily restricted ownership of private herds, sovietisation in Yamal happened later and was rather moderate. Private herds were tolerated there, probably for pragmatic economic reasons. Not surprisingly, it was in Yamal that the 'people followed the migration of deer', whereas in Sakha, 'deer followed the orders of people', according to Soviet rules. Contrary to common assumptions, however, these rules were implemented and executed by native leaders themselves, who had already been integrated into pre-Soviet colonial systems, whereas in Yamal the 'sovietisers' were mainly Russians. This probably had a negative impact, at least at the beginning, on the acceptance of the Soviet model among Yamal reindeer herders.

In spite of these considerable differences, the similarities resulting from a unified model are obvious: a unified structure of enterprises as total social institutions; incorporation into a planned economy, even though the

plan was fulfilled differently; a transformation of work with reindeer from herding to breeding based on scientific methods; and a shift from reindeer herding for subsistence and the well-being of the natives to reindeer breeding as a branch of the agricultural industry, directed towards meat production.

Restructuring the Soviet Economy

What happened during privatisation was in one way similar to what happened during sovietisation. It involved the design of a unified model in Moscow, the implementation of which differed considerably from one region to another. This was possible only because Yeltsin's policy at the time was to allow the regions to work as independently from the federal centre as they could afford (RFE/RL 1993: 1).[8]

The reform of the Soviet agricultural sector and its transfer from a centrally planned economy to a market-structured sector can be seen as a lengthy process in legal terms and even more so in practical terms. However, a few key events were crucial for the reform of this sector. In the first phases of the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the agrarian lobby was still powerful in the Duma, the Russian federal parliament. Therefore, it was extremely difficult to get reforms started. At the beginning of the 1990s, even the most progressive reformers did not question the existence of the state and collective farms (Wegren 1998: 63).

Nevertheless, in 1990, the first steps of reform were undertaken by the twenty-eighth party congress under Gorbachev. It stipulated that farms should be treated as economic rather than administrative units, that they should be allowed to sell surpluses on the market for market prices, and that members of collective or state farms should be able to leave their enterprises (Wegren 1998: 65). This was so complicated and risky for members, however, that nobody in fact did leave. Even today, someone who leaves the farm loses his pension entitlements and health insurance. Nevertheless, with the 'Law on the Peasant Farm' of December 1990 came a formal entitlement to establish a private farm enterprise, the *krestianskoe fermerskoe khoziaistvo* (KFKh), which guaranteed the right to a share of land and a share of the property of the collective farm (Van Atta 1993: 33). However, this law still implied that the basic structure would be the state or collective farm. The law on land reform passed in 1990 guaranteed all types of farms equal existence rights.

In 1991, Yeltsin went a step further. In May, unprofitable enterprises were required to reorganise, but the real shock came at the end of the year,

[8] Yeltsin's policy developed against the background of competition with Gorbachev. Yeltsin was seeking the support of the regions by giving them more freedom.

when a presidential decree forced all collective and state farms to reorganise and change their form of property by the end of March 1992, later extended to 1 January 1993. The agrarian lobby had lost its influence, and what Yamal herders called 'the decade of *bardak*' (chaos) began.[9] How radical the decree was becomes clear in Article 14, which says that every farm unable to pay off its debts would be liquidated by March 1992. In a government resolution to implement this, the following key concepts for reorganisation were proposed, which can be found today as the institutional framework of most agricultural enterprises (Van Atta 1993: 35; Wegren 1998: 69–71):

- A farm could liquidate itself completely, with the members establishing independent peasant farms (KFKh). Although in our specific research regions no farms dissolved completely, KFKhs were established in both Anabar and Yamal.
- A farm could sell itself to an industrial enterprise, an option that some have taken in western Siberia, selling themselves to oil or gas companies such as Gasprom and Surgutneftegaz.
- A farm could dissolve and reunite as an association of independent peasant farms. This option later would be adapted by the Sakha government for the newly established *obshchiny,* or enterprises intended to help revitalise indigenous culture and economy.
- A farm could also convert to a joint stock farm, with two options: a closed stock farm, *akstionernoe obshchestvo zakrytogo tipa,* or AOZT, ZAO, in which all shares would be handed over to a new legal structure and people could get their shares only in agreement with the general members' assembly; or an open stock farm, *akstionernoe obshchestvo otkritogo tipa,* or AOOT, OAO, in which shares would be distributed among the members, who would have the right to sell them to whomever they wanted. The AOZT is the most common form throughout Russia (Wegren 1998: 73) and can be found in the North as well. It is similar to a *tovarichestvo ogranichennoi otvetstvennosti,* or TOO, a 'limited liability company'.
- A farm could be reorganised into a new type of cooperative, with various juridical forms such as a *sel'skokhoziaistvennyi proizvodstvennyi kooperativ,* or SPK, SP. This form can be found in both Sakha and Yamal Okrug.

Despite its defeat, the agrarian lobby succeeded in passing an amendment that allowed farms the possibility of retaining their previous status if the

[9] Interview given to Stammler, spring 2001.

members voted for this option. This was a way for an enterprise not to become illegal immediately and to remain in the state structure. The two crucial points in this reform were that farmland would no longer be owned by the state and that payment of all subsidies was cancelled immediately (Van Atta 1993: 36; Wegren 1998: 70ff.).

This resolution meant that the federal state no longer owned the land. Literature on agrarian central Russia reports that land tenure truly changed there. Private enterprises could apply for land, and state enterprises had to re-register their land as another entity—a group of peasants, shareholders, or workers (Van Atta 1993: 36). However, the role of the regional or municipal state remains unclear from these acts. In Siberia, it was the regional or municipal administrations that commonly were the landowners and that rented or leased the land to the applicants.

The situation was similar for state money. Although central subsidies were cancelled, the state could 'order' a fixed amount of produce from the agricultural enterprises and pay for it in advance at a fixed price. So in fact money continued to flow from the state to the enterprise, even without its being called a subsidy. In the end, almost all land was still held by the 'new' former state farms, which still had a plan of sorts, according to which they were paid and means of production were distributed.

In October 1993, another decree really opened the market. Peasant farmers (KFKh) received legal land titles, the formation of smaller-scale cooperatives was encouraged, and state purchases of production were abandoned. Again, this did not mean that the state withdrew from agriculture. Even today, a very large part of the production, at least in Siberia, is sold to the state, but it is done voluntarily, and the trade is carried out at market prices. Nor did the reform mean that procedures for obtaining land became easier. Often land title was given for a limited time, which sometimes was not worth the investment in obtaining it (Fondahl 1998). Stephen Wegren (1998: 83) provides a figure consistent with this situation: more than 30% of all Russian farms had no losses in personnel and 35% experienced losses of only one to nine members (often only a single family).

Thus, despite expectations that privatisation would transform the collective farm into private property and introduce a market economy, the real situation changed only slightly. The most significant change was that the means of production were no longer distributed by the state, which gave rise to the barter and exchange economy so typical of contemporary Russia (cf. Miller 2001).

The differences between Sakha and Yamal in their implementation of federal privatisation legislation are considerable. Before going into detail, we want to summarise the institutional transformation. The choices for the legal

form of the former sovkhozy in both field sites differed from the stipulations in the privatisation law. In Anabar, two municipal enterprises (*munitsipal'noe unitarnoe predpriiatie,* or MUPs) became the successors of the two respective sovkhozy. Attached to each of these was a subsidiary enterprise (*dochernoe predpriiatie*). The two so-called small-scale enterprises (*maloe predpriiatie*) engage in hunting, as do seven obshchiny. Another three so-called family enterprises (*semeinoe predpriiatie*) were also established. All of these enterprises were registered differently, with different property stipulations. Only the larger enterprises engage in reindeer herding, whereas the smaller ones focus on hunting wild reindeer.

The picture for the Yamal Peninsula looks more like that prescribed by the regulations of the federal privatisation law. The two biggest sovkhozy stayed sovkhozy, as did a large fishing plant that also has Nentsy tundra nomads on its payroll. Two other sovkhozy were transformed into closed joint stock farms (ZAO or AOZT). Two new private enterprises were established, one a limited liability company (TOO) and the other a farming enterprise (KFKh), which even got a land title for reindeer pastures. Only in 2001, after a federal law on *rodovye obshchiny* (clan-based communities) was passed, was the first obshchina established, more or less out of the ruins of the KFKh. However, it is not clear whether the obshchina can 'inherit' the land title of the farming enterprise. Apart from these registered enterprises, in Yamal the majority of reindeer herding is done by private households that are on the payroll of the former sovkhozy, either as reindeer herders (*pastukhi*) or as hunters (*okhotniki*).

The biggest difference between the two field sites was the early development of obshchiny in Sakha, whereas in Yamal this started as a general tendency only in 2001. In terms of the activities of the enterprises, we want to draw attention to the importance of hunting in Anabar in comparison with Yamal. Although in Yamal, many of the private, independent herders are on the payrolls of sovkhozy as 'hunters', they neither hunt in an economically significant way nor get a salary. They live by selling meat and *panty* ('velvet' fresh reindeer antlers) on the free market. This is why in Yamal, unlike in Anabar, all enterprises engage in marketing and trading.

The Case of Sakha

After the declaration of sovereignty in 1991, the political climate in the Republic of Sakha was one of optimism and intentions to restructure and reorganise the old way of life. Within a general policy supporting local, especially Sakha, people, laws that allowed new forms of property were passed. Because the Sakha people were overwhelmingly rural in the beginning of the 1990s, the most important law for them was the law on peasant

farms (*krestianskoe khoziaistvo*), passed on 27 June 1991 following the federal law passed in 1990. The new law allowed an individual to break with the state or collective farm and establish a private farm. An applicant for becoming an independent farmer had the right to get back his share (*pai*) in the collective property, which he had once given to the collective or in which he had invested his labour. Because the peasant farm enterprises were seen, in the euphoria of the first years of the new 'independent' republic, as a key to the revitalisation of Sakha culture and identity, the government launched programmes to support these new enterprises financially.

The equivalent of the peasant farm for the non-Sakha native people in the republic was the clan-based community enterprise (*rodovaya obshchina*). The law on obshchiny was passed in 1992. Members of an obshchina had to include people belonging to the *malochislennye narody* (numerically small peoples, NSP), although the law contained an option that all persons engaged in hunting, fishing, and reindeer herding, regardless of their ethnic origin, could be members of an obshchina. An obshchina was defined as an economic enterprise whose goal was to revitalise the culture and economy of the indigenous minorities (O kochevoi 1992, Articles 1 and 5; Konstantinova 2002). Exactly who is allowed to establish an obshchina is still unclear today. While in the beginning the obshchina was seen as a special form of organisation reserved only for NSPs, in time the northern Sakha and old Russian populations (the latter in most cases already Yakutianised for centuries) were included in the circle of those entitled to establish obshchiny.

Nevertheless, the population did not automatically accept the obshchina as a new institution. In the Anabar district, the first obshchiny appeared after 1995. The first private enterprises in the district were registered as peasant farms (KFKh) and after many years of existence were re-registered as obshchiny, because the latter were exempt from income taxes for their first five years of existence. Besides, an obshchina is not obligated to pay land taxes. In the beginning, the peasant enterprises received more subsidies, and their legal status was clearer. Such status is very important because only certain kinds of 'legal persons' (*iuridicheskoe litso*) are allowed to operate on the market. Banks and enterprises outside Sakha followed only federal laws, and an obshchina, as a federally unrecognised enterprise, had difficulty in selling its products. The first obshchiny and other enterprises existed parallel to the state farm structures. In the 1990s the state farms in the Anabar district were transferred to district property and became municipal enterprises, or MUPs. The MUPs maintained the structures and services of their state farm predecessors: kindergartens, schools, veterinarian services, medical care, and so forth. This meant that despite

official abandonment of the sovkhoz, the 'total social institution' was retained.

New structures existed as private enterprises, however, independently of the MUPs. The informal ties to the MUP were strong, because people switched back and forth between organisations. Besides obshchiny and peasant enterprises, there were many varieties of other institutions: independent brigades of MUPs, subsidiary enterprises, and small-scale enterprises, among others. In 2001 there were 11 reindeer herds, with 900–1,500 head per herd in the Anabar district; six enterprises were engaged in herding these deer. Two of them were MUPs and grazed seven herds; two enterprises were obshchiny; and two others were subsidiary enterprises of the MUPs. This meant that they were part of the MUP but had their own bank accounts and were allowed to sell their produce separately. All of these enterprises were active producers of wild reindeer meat—that is, they were engaged in hunting as well.

Ten other enterprises were engaged in hunting and fishing. Five obshchiny each had about 12–15 members, and in two cases this number included 4 to 6 reindeer herders. Two small-scale enterprises (Tundra and Erel) each had around 15 hunters. Three of these were family enterprises (*semeinye predpriiatia*), each encompassing members of one extended family each (approximately 5 hunters and 1–2 female workers). The MUPs and small-scale enterprises were subordinated to the district, the obshchiny were independent enterprises, and the family enterprises were 'extra-legal'—that is, there was no law concerning them.

The last type of enterprise was the 'private initiative' of the head of the district, who supported the existence of the family-based tundra enterprises because he wanted to help people return to their 'roots'. One such family enterprise was composed of a couple, their sons and daughters, and their respective families. At the peak of hunting season there were around ten adults and six children on the tundra. The head of the family, Spiridon Ivanovich Tuprin, had formerly worked at this spot as a member of a two-man hunting brigade. After his colleague left for the village, he established an obshchina.10 When the head of the district administration later started his policy of supporting family households, the obshchina was re-registered as a family enterprise. When asked why he changed the status, Spiridon Ivanovich replied: 'There were loans to start here. We received credit, and the administration lent us rifles. We do not have a bank account yet, because there is no law for family enterprises. But we will see how it goes. This is a new thing'.

[10] Compare this with the continuous use of hunting spots in Taimyr (Ziker, this volume).

The status of the obshchina as an umbrella for different enterprises is demonstrated in the development of new forms of property in other districts of the Republic of Sakha as well. In the Tomponski district of east-central Sakha, the whole state farm (one of the two richest state farms during the Soviet period) was registered as an obshchina. This obshchina existed for many years but was recently re-registered as an 'agricultural production cooperative trading post', *selskokhoziaistvennyi proizvodvstvennyi kooperativ-faktoria,* or SP(f)K. This may have been spurred by a law that transferred the obshchiny to the sphere of the Ministry for Small-Scale Business (Ministerstvo malogo predprinimatel'stva), so that the enterprise was unable to receive large loans. Still, it seemingly maintained some legal status similar to that of the state farm, because people who left the enterprise received their share in reindeer. This strategy, which is common in Sakha, explains why 22.2% of the reindeer in the Republic of Sakha today belong to obshchiny.[11]

In the Nizhne-Kolymski district of north-eastern Sakha, many former leading veterinarians and 'zoo-technicians', with their relatives, left the state farm in the middle of the 1990s and created their own reindeer obshchina.[12] This enterprise is registered as a 'pure-bred clan-based community' (*plemennaya rodovaya obshchina Nutendli*). 'Pure-bred' refers to the group's goal of maintaining the purity of their Khargin herd.[13] This policy is referred to as the returning to and maintaining of 'traditional branches of economy' and is additionally subsidised by the state. A new concept developed by the Sakha agricultural scientists is to move from mixed herds back to the original regional breeds and preserve reindeer breeding as a lifestyle. The scientists managed to get support for their plans from the state, which provided special subsidies for pure-bred reindeer herds. This is in sharp contrast to Sakhalin and Kamchatka, where people were forced back to the 'traditional ways of economy' not because of state support programmes but because only by using old skills could they survive in the post-Soviet collapse (see Grant 1995; King, this volume).

Attempts to establish reindeer herding obshchiny have been numerous in Anabar. Legally the reindeer are still the property of the MUPs, from which the obshchiny 'lease' them. Nevertheless, the main occupation of obshchiny in Anabar is still hunting; even the herding obshchiny have hunters and make their main profit from wild reindeer meat and polar fox furs.

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[11] Unpublished data from the Sakha Ministry for Agriculture.

[12] The 'zoo-technician' used to be a very important figure in Soviet reindeer herding, having an agricultural and veterinary education and being responsible for the health and migration routes of the herds. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the importance of these people was largely ignored. Many found alternative occupations.

[13] There are four officially recognised breeds of reindeer, one of which is the Khargin breed indigenous to Chukotka.

Engaging in hunting means fewer subsidies but, with good luck, more income. Hunting also means the availability of more cooperative partners. The hunting obshchiny sell their produce to local enterprises, private entrepreneurs, the state hunting company, and branches of the diamond company Alrosa. Many big enterprises support the hunting obshchiny even more than the state supports the reindeer herders. It is common practice that in addition to good prices the hunters receive free groceries and supplies. The district or Alrosa donates the building for an underground ice chamber (*buluu*) and supports obshchina-related people living in the cities. Many people decided to establish hunting or joint hunting-herding obshchiny because of this support.

The situation for reindeer herders is much different than that for hunters. Many herders do not want to break with the MUP and establish their own obshchiny because the enterprise still supplies its own brigades with groceries, ammunition, tent material, and—most importantly—fuel for snowmobiles. At the end of the fieldwork period, only one herding obshchina had been established in the region. As usual, the core workers were relatives who had worked in the same MUP reindeer brigade for years. The new obshchina was supposed to be located on the island of Bolshoi Begichev, far from the village of Uurung Khaia. The members of the new enterprise were enthusiastic about the idea of starting their independent 'household' (*khoziaistvo*). 'Now we are our own bosses; everything we do, we do for ourselves'. On the other hand, some reindeer herders of the former brigade refused to go to Begichev. As one herder explained, 'I don't want to leave the sovkhoz;[14] it is boring on Begichev. Only reindeer and sea. There isn't even much work, because you don't have to watch after the reindeer—they won't escape [because the sea is all around]. And the sovkhoz still gives groceries sometimes. In the obshchina you don't get anything'.

We have shown that in the Republic of Sakha private ownership of reindeer during the Soviet period was not as widespread as in Yamal. In many regions people owned too few reindeer, and the allocations they received from the state farm were not enough for subsistence. In many cases it made no sense to re-establish their own reindeer herds, because it was unprofitable. On the other hand, obshchiny (at least in Anabar) do not own the reindeer; they usually only graze them. In the Anabar district almost all the reindeer are owned by the MUPs.

Some obshchiny might thus be called 'hobby obshchiny'. They consist mostly of old people who do not want to live in the village. They used the chance to leave the state farm and established small herds of 200–300 head with their friends or relatives. The purpose of such obshchiny was never

[14] People still refer to the MUP with its old name, *sovkhoz*.

economic. These people migrate around on the fringes of the state farms and spend their days in the mountains or on the tundra. Because of the small herds, they do not need much space and can always find pastures. Sometimes they slaughter some deer for food, but most of them live off their pensions.

The difficulties of private reindeer herders in the beginning of the obshchina movement were typical for the whole Soviet Union. In most cases the local authorities did not support the establishing of new institutions. The attitude of local scientists towards private reindeer herding was and is negative.[15] Obshchiny and peasant farms in various regions of the North have problems registering their land even today. Legally, a person who leaves the state or collective farm has a right to a share (*pai*) of the enterprise property (Wegren 1998: 74). With this capital he is allowed to establish an obshchina (O kochevoi 1992). But because the state farms or MUPs have often collapsed, the new enterprises have little chance of receiving any shares. On the other hand, the obshchiny, as a parallel movement to the peasant farm movement, had more legal and moral support in Sakha than in other regions. They were able to find support in the patriotic feelings prevalent at the beginning of the 1990s and had the law behind them. In other regions of Siberia, obshchiny had no clear legal status, so even recently they were registered as small-scale enterprises under a name such as '*rodovaya obshchina* XYZ'. Because of their legal status in Sakha, some obshchiny got access to state subsidies and loans and found it easier to enter the market and sign contracts with business partners.

In Anabar, the district owns about 80% of all reindeer. Besides the MUP reindeer brigades, there are other actors on the agricultural landscape who are dealing with domestic reindeer. The district administration manages the reindeer through the MUP. The obshchiny, small-scale enterprises, and subsidiary enterprises only lease the reindeer. The contracts are signed with the director of the MUP and are similar to the contracts the state farm reindeer brigades had at the end of the Soviet period. The enterprise is obliged to keep 70% of the adult animals and 90% of the calves. The number of reindeer is fixed by centralised counting in October; the calves are counted in May. If the number of reindeer is higher than the number fixed in the contract, the enterprise is free to slaughter and sell them. When the enterprise

[15] The opinion expressed by D. I. Syrovatskii, a specialist in reindeer herding, is typical. According to him, the division of the big herds into smaller enterprises is one reason for the decrease of the number of reindeer. The number of people engaged with domestic reindeer herding decreased, but the number of herds increased. The large number and variety of small enterprises do not fit with the old control and regulation structures. Thus, so goes the logic, the discipline and work ethic of the reindeer herders has declined (Syrovatskii 2002: 26, and personal communication).

loses reindeer and the number falls below what it should be, the enterprise must compensate the MUP for the value of the animal. In this way the MUP economises, because it does not have to supply the leaser with groceries and equipment, which it has to do for its own brigades.

At least theoretically, most reindeer in the Republic of Sakha are enumerated on paper. In the case of the Anabar district, the statistics seem reliable. Both the reindeer herders and the officials responsible for reindeer policy in the district are local natives who have grown up on the tundra and know each other well. These people love reindeer and are extremely honest in their work. Attempts to cheat the officials or the MUP's bookkeeping by marking smaller numbers of animals in documents were never observed during fieldwork. There is still informal competition among brigades over who is better at breeding reindeer, who has greater numbers of animals and calves, and who survived the worst snowstorms. This is a matter of pride and is therefore not hidden. Every brigadier keeps his own books, where any losses of deer are noted (although it means that the price of the animals will be subtracted from the loan). Reindeer slaughtered for food are counted as well. A price list exists indicating how much certain parts of the animal cost—skin, head, heart, meat, and so forth. When people distribute parts of the animals among themselves, everyone pays his share.

Roughly 25% of the deer in every herd are privately owned. These are centrally counted as well. Most private reindeer belong to the herders themselves. Every herder has between 20 and 60 reindeer, and the more the better: it shows that the owner is a successful tundrovik. Many hunters and village inhabitants own reindeer as well. They usually give them to friends and relatives who work in the reindeer brigades to herd them. These people can own from 1 to 20 reindeer, mostly 5 to 11. The herder who 'brings the reindeer in' is obliged to look after them. Such a herd contains private reindeer (*ketekh*) from 30 to 40 different owners. The relatively small numbers of private reindeer are probably a result of the reindeer policy during the Soviet period. In the Dolgan village of Popigai, only 200 kilometres west of Uurung Khaia in the Krasnoyarsk region, the share of private deer is larger: all herds together contain about 7,000 head, including 4,000 *ketekh*. This shows the strong consequences of state influence despite similar reindeer herding and breeding techniques in the two regions.

Although the head of the Anabar district administration, Nikolai Egorovich Androssov, encourages private initiative and is a great supporter of the obshchina idea (his ideal is Yamal, where private ownership of reindeer has had a positive effect on the growth of the herds), he is unwilling to give away the district reindeer for free. Yet the obshchiny have no money to buy them. Obshchiny in the Republic of Sakha are classified as small-scale

enterprises and operate under the supervision of the Ministry for Small-Scale Business. The loans offered by this ministry are enough to buy a snowmobile or a used truck, but no state or even private structure gives a loan to buy 500 to 2,000 head of reindeer. Reindeer husbandry is the least privatised part of Sakha agriculture (Tichotsky 2000). Because people lack financing and do not trust the stability of private enterprises, they are reluctant to take the initiative and risk establishing their own enterprises. The development and success of new institutions is tied to old Soviet structures of agriculture and to official concepts of what reindeer herding and hunting should be.

According to a Sakha regional law of 2000, reindeer herders receive a salary from the state budget. This so-called reindeer breeder's salary is paid to every registered reindeer herder, independently of 'the form of the property' (Ob oplate 2000: Article 3). In 2000–2001, the salary was about 2,500 rubles per month for a herder and 1,500 rubles for a *chum rabotnitsa*. MUP workers receive their pay from the MUP; others receive it from the district administration. Normally the reindeer herders do not receive the whole amount; the MUP management keeps its share for lost and slaughtered enterprise animals. Reindeer herders are insured by the state fund SAPI, which supplies them with health care. The reindeer brigades each include one veterinarian, who is supplied by the district's central veterinary office with necessary medicines and instruments. The pension entitlements of the new forms of property are unclear—that is, who is responsible for people's pensions when they retire—but reindeer herders who have retired in recent years have regularly received their pensions. This is partly due to Alrosa, which pays the Anabar district huge sums of money within the framework of a social programme.

Hunters receive state salaries for only three months a year. Their income depends on how much meat, antler, and fur they sell. The MUP hunters have a plan for how much meat they are obliged to give to their enterprise. Usually they fulfil the plan and sell the surplus 'produce' to private entrepreneurs, because the MUP pays low prices for meat.[16] On the other hand, the MUP still supplies its hunters with ammunition, groceries, fuel, and, in some cases, snowmobiles. The hunters are also insured with the MUP and have the right to a pension when they stay with the enterprise. Hunters who left the former state farm and established their own obshchiny and family enterprises have to live only on the income they earn by selling meat.

The hunters are unsatisfied with their second-rate position, and many people feel that the state should help them as much as it does reindeer breed-

[16] The only difference here from the 'manipulable resources' described by Humphrey for Buryatia in the 1980s is that the hunters have a legal to right own and sell their surplus (Humphrey 1998: 435).

ers. Even the head of the administration of Anabar district, Androssov, argues that by helping the reindeer breeders, the state maintains its reindeer capacities, whereas the hunters are a different case, because they can fish and work in the village between hunting seasons. Hunters live in stationary bases (*tochki*) and use snowmobiles for transport. Hunters who have reindeer give them to the reindeer herders to look after. The hunting grounds around a *tochka* are considered the entitlement of the particular hunter based there. There are few hunting territories with fixed borders. The land office of the district usually registers only the location of the base, and the hunters are free to negotiate borders among themselves. Much the same as in the Taimyr region, in Anabar markers of a hunting territory are inheritable polar fox traps (*pasty* in Russian, *paastar* in Dolgan; see Ziker, this volume). This informal entitlement is recognised even by state officials. Even in the Soviet period, hunters were more loosely connected to the state farm than reindeer herders: their activity was less controllable and they were more mobile because they had no big reindeer herds. This situation continues because the state farm has even less capacity to tie hunters to the enterprise.

The hunters cooperate more with particular reindeer brigades than with the MUP as a whole. There are always some common interests. The reindeer herders can use helicopters, which arrive to pick up meat, for travelling to the village or sending their relatives meat and fish. Hunters trade surplus groceries or timber with reindeer herders. Although hunters have enough meat and reindeer furs, certain parts of the domestic reindeer furs are especially valued as material for the most beautiful boots and hats.

In Anabar, hunting was always as important as reindeer herding, if not the main source of income. Every reindeer herder was always engaged in hunting. Some researchers (Gurvich 1977) even describe the populations of the Anabar and Olenek River basins as hunters who had reindeer. The Soviets divided these two occupations. Hunters and reindeer herders became independent categories, equipped and supplied differently and with separate, state-regulated salaries. There were also a few fishing brigades, but most tundroviki in Uurung Khaia were either reindeer herders or hunters who engaged in seasonal fishing as well. Today, these categories in Anabar have become less discrete. The reindeer herd itself produces hardly any surplus. The herders hunt and fish and earn extra income to buy new snowmobiles, clothes, extra ammunition, tools, and fishing nets. Thus the Anabar reindeer herders are, de facto, also hunters.

One of the most important products of the agricultural sector of the Anabar district is reindeer meat. But this is almost 100% wild reindeer meat. Domestic reindeer were last slaughtered five or six years ago. The purpose of reindeer breeding in the district is to preserve the herds and increase their

number until slaughtering again makes sense. Although many former reindeer herders and state farm officials contend that the obshchiny, instead of hunting, kill their own animals to sell the meat, such cases were not observed during fieldwork. The main income for reindeer breeders is the state-guaranteed reindeer herder's salary, which they receive twice a year upon return to the village. To motivate the herders to raise more female animals, the state pays the brigade small subsidies (*matochnaya dotatsiia*) for every female reindeer. Female animals are more highly valued because they 'give produce', that is, produce calves.

The brigades still have a plan to fulfil, as have all enterprises in the district, independent of their status. Their plan is increasing the herd size. This does not mean that the herders are passive actors who live only from their guaranteed salaries. The wages paid by the state are not enough to live on out on the tundra. The so-called *sheffy* are important business partners for the brigades. The institution of *shefstvo* means that the brigade has some partner—a local enterprise in the village, for example—which receives meat and fish from it and pays with either money or goods. To find a *sheff,* the brigade has to apply to the administration, which has a list of enterprises interested in being sheffy. The sheff of one brigade, for example, was a local construction organisation. It helped the members of the brigade with construction materials when they were in the village and wanted to repair their flats. The reindeer herders do not have to look for buyers as actively as hunters, because they hunt sporadically and in smaller quantities. Nevertheless, people try to find partners who offer the best prices and conditions.

In the Republic of Sakha, the marketing of agricultural produce has remained centrally controlled. There are state enterprises that buy and trade agricultural produce: vegetables, grain, fish, meat, and so forth (Nikiforov 2002: 76–77). Two state companies, Sakhabult (for hunters) and Taba (for reindeer herders), are engaged in the 'development and marketing' of hunting, fishing, and reindeer herding. The goal of these companies is to buy the produce and supply the sellers with groceries, ammunition, tools, and other necessities. Although the meat sold by reindeer herders is wild reindeer meat, they must give it to Taba, not to Sakhabult. The prices the state companies pay are not the best, but they pay cash and pay quickly: usually people receive their money within a week. The prices for equipment and groceries are sometimes (but not always) low, because one of Taba's purposes is to support reindeer herding.

Trading posts are not widespread in Anabar. In the whole district there is only one trading post (*faktoria*) on the tundra. Reindeer herders and hunters of this region prefer to buy their groceries there. The prices are high, but buyers do not have to transport the goods to the tundra or the meat back to

the village. The trading post has a large underground ice chamber. Reindeer herders usually buy groceries on credit in early spring. After the big wild reindeer hunt in the autumn, they come back and pay their debts with meat. Although the organisation that owns the trading post also sells snowmobiles, reindeer herders prefer to buy their vehicles from private entrepreneurs (*kommersanty*). The entrepreneurs charge higher prices, but it is possible to arrange contracts with them for three to five years and make payments over this time. Reindeer herders have to purchase many goods, especially potatoes, clothes, and spare parts for snowmobiles, from these entrepreneurs, because state organisations do not sell them at all. So reindeer herders often have to look for trading partners, depending on what goods they need.

Hunters, who operate with larger amounts of meat and fish, have to be more active in finding buyers. Their usual partners are private entrepreneurs, local enterprises (schools, sausage factories, airports), and branches of the diamond company Alrosa that need meat to feed workers. Alrosa is highly esteemed as a partner, but it takes only large amounts of meat and fish. Because of its social programmes, Alrosa pays good prices and helps hunters build underground ice chambers, transport goods to the village at the company's expense, and so forth. There have been cases in which Alrosa helped people build flats in the village or supplied a hunter's relatives or children with workplaces and flats in the town. Hunters who have Alrosa as a trading partner rely heavily on this cooperation.

The young antlers of the reindeer (*panty*) are the only market commodity in domestic reindeer herding. Antlers were big business in the early 1990s, but prices fell, and they are not as profitable as they once were. Reindeer herders still cut the antlers, but without enthusiasm; they try to avoid the task as much as possible. It is widely believed that cutting young antlers lessens the quality of the herd. In addition, the herders receive little income from it. During the period of fieldwork, the brigades earned around 15,000 rubles per year from the antlers. Dividing the sum among the members of the brigade made for 2,000–2,500 rubles per person, which was not a large sum. The cutting and selling of *panty* in the Anabar district is under the control of the administration. The head of the administration chooses a few herds in which antlers will be cut every year. One private entrepreneur has a monopoly on the *panty* trade in the district and picks the antlers up with a helicopter. The antler collecting season is in the spring, after the calving season. Hunters sell antlers as well; they cut these from the wild reindeer they have killed. At the hunting posts, 'mountains' of wild reindeer antlers can be observed as they rot. Usually the antlers are cut before the helicopter arrives, but hunters have to do it when they shoot the game. Hence, the

antlers from wild reindeer lose their quality and are sold at a low price unattractive to the hunters.

In Anabar, as in the whole of Sakha, the state has made it a goal to separate reindeer herding from economic performance. That is, reindeer herding is not subordinated to the rules of the market economy. Hunting is conceptually different: its produce is a commodity, although, in terms of property, hunters and fishers do not own their prey as long it is alive, whereas herders do.

The Case of Yamal

In Yamal, a boom in reindeer herding began when perestroika developed (see Fig. 11.1). Herd numbers continued to increase in the 1990s and are still doing so. This is atypical for postsocialist Siberia, where in most regions reindeer herd numbers decreased rapidly (see Gray 2000 and this volume). In Yamal, the number of deer as well as the number of herders increased continually, the tundra became an attractive place to live, and herders perceived it as becoming increasingly overcrowded.

The privatisation process in Yamal Okrug is not atypical for rural Russia. The scenario is very similar to the one described by Wegren (1998: 82). In contrast to other rural Russian regions (see Gray, this volume; Humphrey 1998), in Yamal there were no collective farms (kolkhozy) after 1965, so only state farms (sovkhozy) needed to be restructured. The most accepted forms of successor organisations to state farms in Yamal, as in rural Russia in general, were closed joint stock farms (ZAO or AOZT) and farms retaining their previous status. In Yamal the biggest and nominally most successful farms were those that retained their status. Two of them are on the Yamal Peninsula itself. Smaller farms with fewer reindeer also became TOOs or SPKs or changed their form of property several times. To go into the exact institutional details here would be the task of a legal or economic study. What is relevant for the anthropological argument is that, just as in Sakha, the state structure in the agricultural sector is still alive and relevant for the people. No matter what form of property the enterprises have now, they are still perceived as sovkhozy. In Yamal, the okrug officially treats every registered enterprise equally, regardless of its legal property form. Differences are mainly due to the fact that former state farms have better inside knowledge of how to apply for loans or credit and know the people in the Department of Agriculture better. However, over the course of the last ten years, newly founded, private, vertically integrated reindeer enterprises have also built up good connections to the administration. As a result, today former state farms and private reindeer enterprises compete under similar conditions for shares in the market for reindeer products.

In Yamal there was virtually no obshchina movement until 2000, unlike the case in Sakha, which was the only Russian region with a law on obshchiny between 1992 and 2000. Obshchiny that registered on the basis of a regional law on local self-government did so on an extremely unstable legal basis. There were no clear regulations for their economic activity or their land rights. Thus, no obshchina in Yamal is connected to former state structures in any way, but is in direct competition with them.

The history of the origin of obshchiny in Yamal is also different. The first ones were established to assure some basic rights for indigenous tundra or forest dwellers against the expansion of the oil and gas industry. Members of these first obshchiny lived mainly on compensation payments from the industrial enterprises. The situation began to change after the adoption of the federal law on obshchiny in 2000 and the federal law on traditional nature use in 2001 (*Obshchina* 2000; TTP 2001). A movement has begun to re-register previously existing peasant farm enterprises (KFKh) as obshchiny, because the latter do not have to pay taxes and get assistance from the okrug through a programme for supporting the economy of indigenous peoples. This change in the legal basis also implies a change in the nature of the obshchiny themselves. Bearing in mind their origin as KFKhs, these new obshchiny are basically economic enterprises, but with minority privileges. Their economic activities are mainly reindeer herding, but in the forest tundra there are also fishing obshchiny.

There was no example of a former state farm re-registering as an obshchina in Yamal. However, in the whole okrug, two private reindeer herding cooperatives succeeded in leaving the state enterprise, getting a share of land and working with their own reindeer. Each of these cooperatives also received the herd of one reindeer brigade as a share (*pai*) of the state enterprise. Because all the herders were relatives, this became something like a family brigade. Although these enterprises are called obshchiny, in the absence of an explicit law at the time they were not registered as such but as peasant farms (KFKh). Therefore, they still have to pay taxes on their production. Since the federal law on obshchiny has been passed, the situation may change soon, and the head of one of the private cooperatives has already expressed his desire to re-register as an obshchina.

The first obshchina on the Yamal Peninsula was founded in 2000 and began to function in 2001. Institutionally, it developed out of the 'ruins' of a KFKh called Nesej, but in fact it was based on private reindeer herding households in the north of the peninsula. The obshchina, called Ilebts, proudly reports that it controls approximately 25,000 reindeer, for which it gets subsidies from the okrug government. This is a very recent development, because so far, subsidies have been paid only for the production of

reindeer (mainly meat), and not for grazing. This new practice clearly contradicts efforts to reduce overgrazing, especially on the Yamal Peninsula, because subsidies for grazing reindeer create an incentive to increase herd numbers. However, local experts such as Aleksandr Yuzhakov, head of the reindeer research station in Salekhard, think that as a first step to strengthen these new institutions, such an approach is viable, through an exception to the rule that subsidies should be paid for production only.[17] This means that after obshchiny such as Ilebts become stable economic institutions, they should be treated like other forms of reindeer enterprises in terms of subsidies. As in the Anabar case, Ilebts is not the legal owner of the deer, although it gets state subsidies for them. But unlike in Anabar, the district or the municipality formally is not involved at all; the owners remain the private herders. Interestingly, in recent statistics these reindeer now appear twice—once as the property of the herders and again as the deer for which the obshchina gets state (okrug) subsidies. Since this is the first such case in Yamal, in future years the procedures will be more standardised.

Ilebts is also exceptional because its leader, Mikhail Okotetto, is a well-known Nentsy with a higher education and excellent contacts with the indigenous leadership on the regional level as well as the Russian federal and even the international level. Because his father is a highly appreciated elder who still works as head of the municipality in north Yamal, it was also much easier to get support from the Yamal governor (who is Russian). In this way Okotetto, as head of the first big obshchina, can influence how the federal law of 2000 will be implemented in Yamal Okrug, since a regional law on obshchiny has not yet been passed by the okrug duma.[18]

Municipalisation of state farms like that in Sakha has begun only recently in Yamal. Most state enterprises were re-registered at the okrug level after the dissolution of Soviet Union. In 2002, the first two became municipalised, which did not cause significant changes in their structure or work. One of them was the sovkhoz Yar-Salinskii, which claimed to be the biggest reindeer sovkhoz in all of Russia. In 2001 it could no longer pay its debts, and the Department of Agriculture decided to let it go bankrupt. This was a defeat for the Nentsy sovkhoz director, who was simultaneously the president of the Russian reindeer herders' association. Some of his reindeer herder employees, however, had blamed him long before for engaging too much in national and international events in this latter capacity and forgetting his duties to navigate the sovkhoz through the difficult waters of post-

[17] Email communication with Stammler, 17 September 2002.

[18] The most recent information on Ilebts stems from a visit by Mikhail Okotetto to MPISA in February 2002.

Soviet transformation.[19] The result of this bankruptcy was the re-establishment of the enterprise under district authority as an MUP, with no debts and with a new director. For the formal procedure of bankruptcy, the old enterprise, under another director, continued to exist on paper with half of its 20 brigades, which will officially be handed over to the new enterprise after the official dissolution of the old one. In March 2002 there were two enterprises on paper instead of one. However complicated such procedures might appear, for the reindeer herders themselves nothing changed significantly.

'The *kommersanty* can go bankrupt and vanish suddenly without warning, whereas the sovkhoz will not. When the sovkhoz goes bankrupt, the state will care for us, because even as private herders we have to have some kind of organisation' (*Yakov Naberevich Vanuito, 1 June 2001*). This opinion of a private reindeer herder in north Yamal is representative of opinions among the herders.[20] The whole process of reorganising the Yar-Salinskii sovkhoz, complicated as it may appear, confirms the reindeer herders' confidence in the state's responsibility and in the stability of the sovkhozy, no matter what actual legal form they have. As in Anabar, they have retained their function as total social institutions, although some of their responsibilities have been handed over to the municipality.

The loss of qualified personnel in the former state farms is common to Anabar and Yamal. In both cases, qualified experts in reindeer herding saw no career prospects within the state structure. The difference was that in Yamal they could not shift to the obshchiny, so they tried their chances in business in the liberalised economic climate: they established commercial enterprises for trading in reindeer raw materials, meat, and *panty* bought from private herders mainly on the Yamal Peninsula. These enterprises became vertically integrated, which means that they are engaged both in production (slaughtering deer, cutting *panty*) and processing (packing and shipping meat, drying *panty*). Later they too became entitled to state support. The crucial difference between the former state farms and these commercial enterprises is that the latter hire reindeer herders only on a contractual basis and do not have brigades of their own. Thus these enterprises respond flexibly to the evolving market economy.

The actual legal form of these vertically integrated enterprises varies. One of them used to be the KFKh Nesej mentioned earlier, which was succeeded by the obshchina Ilebts. Thus, an obshchina in Yamal can also function as a vertically integrated reindeer enterprise. Another enterprise is registered as a TOO. Both get support from the okrug for engaging in the

[19] These criticisms were expressed in interviews in 1998, 2000, and 2001.
[20] Survey among 26 reindeer herding households in Yamal, 2001.

free market with reindeer produce. State control of these enterprises is rather loose in comparison with that in Sakha. The only important expectation on the part of the okrug is that the enterprises register in some way. Illegal commercial incomers, especially from the neighbouring European Russian North, who also try to do business by trading with reindeer herders without registration in the okrug, are officially not tolerated by the state. However, some of them are successful, because state control is not strict.

The sovkhozy have taken some measures to prevent herders from working for commercial enterprises. In two examples, herders lost their jobs in the sovkhoz, where they were registered as 'hunters'. Apart from these exceptions, almost all tundra dwellers are still registered as workers in the sovkhozy, either as herders (*pastukhi*) or as hunters (*okhotniki*) in the way described for Anabar. But whereas in Anabar the herders are de facto hunters, in Yamal all registered hunters are de facto herders of their private deer. At the same time, all of these people have their private herds, no matter what their affiliation is. Nevertheless, nobody wants to leave the sovkhoz structure, for reasons of social security. Because the sovkhoz is perceived as *the* organisation, 24 out of the 26 household heads interviewed in Yamal were convinced that it is still needed, although they all trade with commercial enterprises.

What we have in Yamal are multiple links between the herders and various enterprises competing for their produce. These enterprises cover the whole variety of institutional forms currently possible in Russian agriculture.

The differences between Anabar and Yamal become significant in the reindeer property regimes. Most probably, the Anabar district head, Androssov, is right in linking these different property regimes to the different chances of development in reindeer herding. However, it is far too simple to assume that merely privatising reindeer would solve all problems. The Yamal example shows that a purely neo-liberal model of development will not necessarily be successful. We argue that a system based on private property in animals and market relations is working successfully, not although but *because* the okrug is still heavily involved in providing social infrastructure and social security and is also allocating resources and subsidies to the economic actors, be they individual herders, private commercial or non-commercial enterprises, or former state farms. It is important, however, that okrug policy stimulate individual economic performance, instead of making it uninteresting for people to work. This has been done successfully in Yamal.

In present-day Yamal, there are two official forms of property in reindeer: private individual property (70%) and that owned by the restructured state farms (30%). No official rent is paid for animals or whole herds. The

normal situation is that the user of the deer is also the owner. The example of the obshchina Ilebts is no exception, because the herds still count as private property of the herders.

Nevertheless, the use and exchange of animals not belonging to oneself was always a widespread indigenous practice, as reported by Vladimir Evladov (1992). Many such practices are still carried out, as when herders employed in brigades use sovkhoz animals for private transportation, or when households with extremely small private herds (fewer than 100 head) join friends or relatives to migrate together. In such cases, relatives may share transport bulls for pulling sleds. Moreover, networks of gift exchange are perpetuated, in which deer are given among relatives or friends. The donor receives another reindeer or two later. One person can be in several such networks, which means he can give away deer to several persons and receive deer from several persons. However, this delayed exchange is numerically insignificant in comparison with total herd size. It is a means of reproducing kinship and friendship ties. Another form of cooperation in the use of animals is similar to the Anabar case described earlier: many native villagers have deer—normally in smaller numbers—and give them to their relatives on the tundra to graze. In the northernmost parts of the Yamal Peninsula, some sovkhoz herders give their private deer to relatives because they think it is unfavourable to herd them together with the state herd.

On the rest of the peninsula, the place where private ownership and enterprise ownership of reindeer meet is the brigade herd. Normally, more than half of such herds are the private animals of *pastukhi* employed in the brigade. Total herd size can reach more than 5,000 animals, if the brigade herd is big enough and every herder owns at least several hundred deer. The grazing itself is supervised jointly by the herders. A household owning fewer than 50 animals is rare, and fewer than 100 are thought still to be insufficient for life on the tundra. In northern Yamal in 2000, out of 300 households, 200 had more than 100 deer, and only 20 households had fewer than 50. Most of the households with few animals were village households.[21] Having composite herds of state-owned and private animals is very favourable for the herders, because they can use sovkhoz resources for their private herds, too. Private production parallels work for the sovkhoz, as described by Humphrey (1998: 188).

The control of property by the enterprises is much less dirigiste in Yamal than in Anabar. Sovkhoz herds are counted only in the autumn, before the slaughtering campaign. The spring count has in many cases been abandoned. Earmarking of deer is done independently by most herders and brigade employees. Private herds are not counted regularly. The owners of

[21] Village council statistics from Se-Yakha, north Yamal, September 2000.

private deer count their herds for themselves. Although currently there is no official limit for private herd sizes, people tend to under-represent their herd numbers. Nevertheless, statistics show the actual trends, because municipal administration officials know most herders and thus know who is rich and who is poor.

The paperwork concerning property within a sovkhoz brigade, however, remains the same as in the Soviet period, as was described for Anabar. Calving is documented by the brigade leader, along with losses and the slaughtering of sovkhoz deer for food. Although the slaughtered deer are distributed among the brigade members, unlike in Anabar there is no calculation of who eats which part and how much it costs. The herder himself covers the costs of the slaughtered animal completely, and he invites other colleagues to participate in the meal. Until recently, losses in sovkhoz deer because of wolves, disease, or the crossing of Ob' Bay did not have to be compensated from the herder's private animals. Therefore, in the years of sovkhoz weakness from 1992 to 2000, public herds diminished, whereas private herds flourished. Indeed, the herders were not as honest as in Anabar, and they often compensated for their own losses in deer by switching earmarks.

The introduction of a market economy to Yamal was the decisive moment for the rise of reindeer herding in the region, although the ethnographic material on state enterprises already presented shows that this kind of market economy is far from fitting a purely neo-liberal model. The okrug is engaged in this market as one dominant actor, but not the only one, and not in an authoritarian manner. It acts as a buyer of produce (at market prices), and it allocates means of production (subsidies), but these are no longer restricted to a particular form of enterprise. Normally, the state has contracts with enterprises for the produce it buys, but the incentive for this contract today is the opposite of what it was in the Soviet period. The enterprise is happy to give as much produce as possible to the state, because the prices are favourable, the state pays in advance, and the enterprise does not have to search for other marketing possibilities. This is also true for non-state enterprises of every kind.

There is free competition among all producers and enterprises. The only advantage that sovkhozy have is that they still have subsidised transportation equipment such as trucks and all-terrain vehicles (*vezdekhody*). For helicopters, they have to compete with private enterprises. The other advantage sovkhozy have is that they usually do not have to apply for state contracts, because they still have those from the Soviet period.

As far as plans are concerned, in the sovkhoz sector there are plans for every brigade, but unlike in Soviet times, the plan is made by the enterprise

itself, in most cases in cooperation with the brigadier. In meetings with sovkhoz directors, the okrug Department of Agriculture can express its disapproval of sovkhoz performance or praise it. The other competitors are the vertically integrated reindeer enterprises mentioned earlier. Some of them also have state contracts. The third competitor is smaller private commercial entrepreneurs, sometimes illegal ones. These three types of economic actors compete for the raw materials produced by reindeer herders and their herds: meat, *panty,* and to some extent furs. The leg fur (*lapy*) is of special interest for regions in the Russian North with fewer reindeer, because it is the raw material for winter boots (*burki, unty*). Several thousand *lapy* are sold to Sakha and Buryatia every year.

The oil and gas enterprises are other economic actors working outside the official market. Reindeer herders prefer them to the commercial enterprises because they trade with herders on an exchange basis without interest in profits. They basically need meat and sometimes furs for their workers, and they offer the whole range of goods—equipment as well as food—that herders need. For many items, prices charged by the gas enterprises are three times less than those of the commercial enterprises, but herders also get less for their produce. The terms of trade are, nevertheless, comparable. One kilogram of sugar equals 1.2–2.0 kilograms of meat given to a commercial enterprise, whereas sugar from the gas-worker village costs 0.66 kilograms of meat.[22] Thus, the gas enterprises play a role similar to that of Alrosa in Anabar. The difference is that their social programme is not institutionalised. In the Soviet period, gas workers even engaged individually in trade with reindeer herders. The gas enterprise where fieldwork was done engages in these trade relations, but not for financial profit: it sells food for the same price at which it buys it. The benefit for the gas workers lies in the direct exchange: cheap fresh meat that has not been transported through half of Russia before it arrives in the North, and special orders of warm fur boots and clothes. On the free market, the main buyers of reindeer produce apart from the okrug are the inhabitants of the industrial cities and the capital, Salekhard, and institutions such as boarding schools, hospitals, and prisons.

For *panty,* the situation is different. *Panty* is much more important in Yamal than in Sakha: it is the driving force behind the market economy. The okrug does not engage in the *panty* business. Although during the first enthusiasm about the *panty* business at the beginning of the 1990s, prices were as high as US$100 per kilogram, a price of $30–40 makes the business profitable enough to engage in, for enterprises as well as for herders. Most

[22] Prices for the enterprise Nesej for 2000. Price lists are not always printed, a lack of clarity that opens the scene for manipulation and exploitation. For the gas enterprise, prices are for the village of Sabetta, which is run by a gas exploration company.

sovkhozy started to work with private herders in harvesting *panty* only in 2001, so the sector is controlled mainly by vertically integrated, small-scale commercial enterprises. Some reindeer herders already earn more money from *panty* than from meat. A normal upper-class household could buy a snowmobile every second or third year with income from *panty*. Most of the material is sold to middlemen in Moscow. Some enterprises, sovkhozy as well as commercial, have direct access to the Chinese market.

The producing of *panty* and the first step in processing and trading it, however, are controlled by native Nentsy gatekeepers. This is not surprising, because in order to find the producers of the raw material—reindeer herders and their herds—the trader has to know exactly how and where they migrate at which time of the year. Such inside knowledge is possessed only by natives engaged in the organisation of reindeer herding. The vertically integrated reindeer enterprises run by former sovkhoz employees have the best qualifications for this kind of business. They serve not only as middlemen between Moscow-based or international businessmen but also as buffers between the rude practices of a mafia and the *zakon tundry* (law of the tundra), which is based on hospitality, mutual help, and honesty. This is why we still observe the great importance of trust and cooperation among herders on the tundra, as described by Ziker (this volume). Exceptions to this confirm the rule and are particularly disapproved of by other natives—for example, when a native businessman betrays his tundra clients by making them drunk and then signing contracts with unfair terms of trade.

The gathering of the raw *panty* is a highly cost- and time-intensive matter and has to be well organised logistically. The normal procedure is that in June the enterprises hire helicopters to fly to every reindeer-herding household to ask how many antlers each intends to cut and sell and to negotiate a price. Then an exact date for picking up the *panty* is negotiated. With this first helicopter, the enterprise provides the herders with staple foods and equipment, such as bread, tea, sugar, cigarettes, radios, batteries, and rubber boots. The herders can make particular requests of the helicopter crew, which the crew brings in on the second trip. The actual cutting of the antlers has to be done the day before they are taken up by the helicopter, not earlier. This is because fresh *panty*—full of blood and smooth bone substance—quickly begin to rot in the tundra summer and cannot be processed anymore. The herders cut the *panty* and deposit them one night in the tundra. The next day the helicopter crew comes, weighs them, and issues a receipt on which the cash equivalent of the *panty* is written down. From this, the price for the goods supplied with the first load is subtracted, as well as the price for the ordered goods supplied with the second load. In the end, either the herder or

the enterprise owes the other money. This is calculated either in the slaughtering campaign in autumn or in next year's *panty* business.

> Last year we had a very busy summer here. Within two weeks, the helicopters landed eight times to trade with us for *panty*. Imagine how confused the herd gets from all this. Anyway, business went well, with four different enterprises. When the last one flew in, we already had almost nothing to trade, because we had promised everything to the other enterprises. All this was really hard work. This year we will do it differently. We will compare the prices and what goods they offer, and then we will select with whom to trade for what amount of *panty*. (Nikolai Khorotetto, private herder, northern Yamal, May 2001)

This statement shows how competitive the antler business is and how the herders have to learn to deal with choices between enterprises. Everybody welcomes these possibilities, which provide a whole range of new goods to the tundra. It also shows how the lives of herders have changed in the summer. Before the antler business, summer was a rather calm season, when herders were the farthest away from any settlements and thus from any outside material goods. They were physically isolated because the rivers were not frozen and could not be crossed. The new air traffic is a considerable disturbance to this previous rhythm. It also brings the perception that the distance between remote spots on the tundra and villages or towns is decreasing. It is easier now for people to move back and forth than it used to be.[23] This stands in sharp contrast to the situations in regions such as Taimyr (Ziker, this volume) and Kamchatka (King, this volume). In Yamal we do not observe a greater reliance on subsistence (Ziker) or that 'post-Soviet = post-industrial' (King).

Once the *panty* are flown to the village, they are put in huge underground ice chambers until they are shipped by water to the first processing plant. From there they go to Moscow or directly abroad, which is where the native influence in this business ends.

Meat is the classic and still most important commodity in reindeer herding. Reindeer herders sell their meat directly to all possible places and make a good business of it. Here, trading posts (*faktorii*) still play an important role. Most of them are run by sovkhozy, but the vertically integrated commercial herding enterprises also run trading posts. The commercial

[23] This does not mean that there are no transportation problems in Yamal. Fuel is still expensive, and only those with good connections to the 'lords of the helicopters' can use this transportation for free.

enterprises and the sovkhozy sell meat bought from private herders either in their own stores or directly from the warehouses to the population. They set up stalls in the markets in the cities; they have contracts with public institutions; and they have contracts with the okrug to supply meat. For the institutions, which have to decide whether to buy meat directly from the herders or from enterprises, there are benefits and drawbacks either way. Buying without middlemen is cheaper, but buying from enterprises means getting meat certified as clean and without diseases.

The complex interrelation of all these actors makes the market in Yamal an open field offering many possibilities for making money. Reindeer herders have become familiar with the rules of this game, and most of them act intelligently as small entrepreneurs, seeking out and testing various partners in search of the most favourable conditions. One of the reasons they are successful is that they have always engaged in selling meat to somebody, even in the Soviet period. The precondition for that was the preservation of private herds. In Soviet times, the sovkhozy and the industrial companies were the only possible trading partners. Now the field is open, and herders are in a position to choose a partner from among numerous competitors.

Conclusion

Our comparison of two peripheral regions in the Russian North shows what consequences different approaches to post-Soviet transformation have had for the tundra inhabitants. Collectivisation was supposed to force reindeer herders and their herds into a static concept of industrialised Soviet agriculture, but the reality was always regionally highly divergent.

Because socialism influenced life on the tundra to a larger extent in Sakha, the native population there became more assimilated into the state structure. Successful sedentarisation and extreme limits on owning private reindeer changed the way of life of the northern peoples. The fact that most of the sovietisation policy was planned and pushed through by local Dolgan and Sakha who knew the language, traditions, and economy of local people should not be underestimated. Local people also had leading positions in Soviet political and economic structures from the 1930s onwards. As a consequence, reindeer herders and hunters became loyal, 'civilised' citizens and adopted Soviet values, while at the same time they were regarded as the most 'traditional' peoples of the North, a kind of Soviet (and post-Soviet) 'noble savage'.

In Yamal, private reindeer herding remained a large-scale activity, often hidden in state structures (sovkhoz herds). Unlike in Sakha, most high-ranking officials and reindeer specialists were incomers who, in the beginning, had authority problems among the Nentsy. In Yamal, tundroviki were

never forced to give up their traditional lifestyle, as long as it seemed economically rational and people pretended to be good citizens. Our investigation has shown that it was the incomplete implementation of the collectivisation and sedentarisation ideology, mixed with people's careful search for the holes in the system—rather than resistance or some essentialist independence in Nentsy culture (Golovnev and Osherenko 1999)—that made possible the uninterrupted herding of private reindeer.

As far as post-Soviet restructuring is concerned, in Sakha the administrative framework was adopted more quickly and thoroughly. The first law on obshchiny provided a stable basis for reorganising reindeer enterprises early in the transition process. As a consequence, reorganisation was done in a more centralised way. People working in the native economy were still paid salaries by the state, and the production process was centrally controlled. The reindeer are counted by state officials, and state subsidies support reindeer herding as such. Different forms of enterprises each have a particular status that determines their position in the market, as well as their access to forms of credit. State regulation has maintained a de jure Soviet planned system: every enterprise, independent of its status, should fulfil its plan as given by the district administration. The difference from the Soviet planned economy is that the state does not guarantee that produce will be bought. Although the marketing structures and policies are given by the state, the individual has to develop his own ways of finding buyers and meeting his own ends.

In Yamal, the transformation process was less controlled by the okrug. Therefore, a broad variety of different initiatives and forms of property developed, which gave way to an evolving market economy. The economic space consists of many different actors—remaining sovkhozy as well as different kinds of commercial enterprises. One important factor is that the state has less direct control over and influence on reindeer herding. The sizes of herds are less controllable, and in many cases it is not clear how many private reindeer they contain. At first glance, enterprises in Yamal are allowed to produce and sell as much as they want. The state influences the market by distributing subsidies to every economic actor, trying to treat all forms of economic institutions equally. Therefore, a strict economic hierarchy that could influence individual marketing strategies in Yamal is lacking.

Our comparison of the market economy in Sakha and Yamal shows similarities as well as differences. It became clear that the free market can play a role only in spheres in which produce is the private property of the producer. Therefore, there is no domestic reindeer market in Anabar, whereas in Yamal there is. This is why the head of the administration in Anabar can decide who cuts *panty* in which herd, whereas Yamal herders

decide for themselves. In Anabar, the produce belonging to the tundra dwellers themselves is wild reindeer and fish. With these commodities, they enter the free market just as Yamal herders do with their private meat and *panty*. The two regions also differ in terms of the politics of subsidies, as in Sakha subsidies are paid for living reindeer, whereas in Yamal, they are paid for dead ones. Exceptions to this, as described for one obshchina, do not contradict the principle of the state approach in Yamal. This reveals the differences between the two regional states, one aiming at preserving the indigenous way of life, the other at supporting economic performance on the market.

However, we have shown that even though the leading principle of the Sakha economy seems to be dirigisme, in fact the economic actors perform a variety of market transactions. In Yamal, on the other hand, herders are unwilling to get rid of the state structures, although they act as private entrepreneurs in the antler and meat market economy.

The degree of state intervention is commonly considered to be the decisive variable in the classification of economies. However, behind economic models we can discover unexpected economic processes. Our anthropological analysis shows that the internal functioning of the economy can differ from external appearances. Thus, we cannot say that in Yamal we have discovered neo-liberalism, and in Sakha, dirigisme. Such 'ideal types' can facilitate some kinds of economic analysis, but they are inevitably modified by the lived realities of the two regions.

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Chapter 12

'Horseradish Is No Sweeter than Turnips' Entitlements and Sustainability in the Taimyr Autonomous Region, Northern Russia

John P. Ziker

From the nineteenth century onwards, the 'agrarian question' in Russia has been a question of how best to transform the peasantry, thought of as tradition-minded (Weber 1958), as loath to innovate (Kingston-Mann 1991), and even as the root cause of the country's backwardness (Stalin 1931, quoted in Shanin 1972: 45). The policies that followed the emancipation of the serfs (1861), the Stolypin reforms (1906–11), and even collectivisation (1929–34) aimed at this transformation (Moon 1999), although with very different approaches. The peasants and other non-industrialised populations in Russia, such as the indigenous Siberian hunters and herders who are the focus of this chapter, responded to agrarian policies according to the details and degree of their perceived mistreatment. For example, in the 1920s and 1930s, private livestock owners in Siberia slaughtered their animals rather than turn them over to collective farms (*kolkhozy*) (Forsyth 1992).

Similarly, in the postsocialist period, governments, academics, and development agencies formulated plans to transform Russia's backward socialist agricultural enterprises into a modern and efficient productive system (Wedel 1998). While reversing the Soviet approach to ownership, the latest policies have in a sense retained the Marxist assumption that capitalisation, markets, the more rational use of resources, and thus material progress are all tied to the development of private property (Engels 1942 [1884]; Speck 1915). Similar links are posited by Western models of economic transformation that promote private property as a panacea (Greenspan 1997; Lerman 2002). The case of postsocialist land reform in rural areas of the Taimyr Autonomous Region challenges all such models.

Mediating the relationships between the people, the land, and agricultural production, three major issues have developed in Russia's agrarian sector: the efficiency of agriculture, the quality of life for rural people, and the sustainability of communities (Wegren and O'Brien 2002). The first

issue, efficiency of agriculture, has been and still is the top priority for Western policymakers and agricultural economists (Bezlepkina 2002; Epstein 2002; Serova 2002). Massive investment in the rural economy, part and parcel of the Soviet agricultural and hunting industries after collectivisation, was made with the expectation that production would increase rapidly, which it did in most areas. In the postsocialist era, policymakers and agricultural economists have set out to improve, more or less subtly, the productivity of 'inefficient' Soviet-era farms under market conditions. From an economic perspective, empirical data such as figures on ownership of property, prices, inputs and outputs, subsidies, labour costs, and areas under cultivation enter into complex multivariate analyses. Correlations between the most productive farms and certain values in these constellations of variables provide an ideal model of efficiency, which plays a central role in policy recommendations (Osborne and Trueblood 2002). These analyses, though complex and predictive, are not causal in the sense that the reasons for a given event can be traced back in time (McCay 2002). In addition, they often obfuscate the other two important agrarian issues: quality of life and community sustainability.

I begin this chapter with a brief introduction to my main field site, along with the institutions and practices of the hunting, fishing, and trapping economy of the Dolgan and Nganasan people down to the end of the USSR in 1991. Next, I describe the institutional reforms in the Taimyr region as they pertain to production and property and describe their effects on these people. Finally, I describe the development of new property relationships and coping strategies, with an emphasis on sharing and reciprocity. These developments show why private property is not always the most rational strategy when the quality of rural life and community sustainability are taken into consideration.

The chapter is based on material collected over a total of 22 months of fieldwork in the Taimyr region, beginning in 1992, including 14 months in and around the settlement of Ust'-Avam, where most of my research took place. Shorter visits were made to Khantaiskoe Ozero, Tukhard, and Khatanga, and several months were spent in Dudinka, the regional capital. In 2001, a return visit to Ust'-Avam for four months allowed me to update the situation there.

Currently, both Dolgan and Nganasan people inhabit Ust'-Avam (population 660), along with a minority of non-natives from other parts of the former Soviet Union. The Dolgan language is similar to Sakha (Yakut), the northernmost branch of the Turkic language family. The Dolgan traditionally were reindeer herders, trappers, and hunters, and their ethnic group coalesced from Yakut, Evenk, and Russian populations that moved into the

Taimyr region beginning in the seventeenth century (Anderson 2000; Dolgikh 1963). The current Dolgan population in the region is close to 5,000.

Nganasan is one of six languages in the Samoyedic branch of the Uralic language family. The Nganasan, known historically as hunter-gatherers, also used domestic reindeer for transportation in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (Dolgikh 1962). Nganasan are well known in the Siberian ethnographic literature for their shamanism and animist beliefs (Gracheva 1983; Popov 1984). The majority of the approximately 1,000 Nganasan presently live alongside the Dolgan in three permanent settlements in the Taimyr Autonomous Region, one of which is Ust'-Avam.

Soviet-Era Institutions and Their Collapse

Indigenous reindeer-driven transportation along tracts across the tundra and taiga allowed for mobility of the indigenous people as well as access and transportation for trade organisations and, after the 1917 revolution, for Communist Party missionaries and administration. Capitalising on this pre-existing infrastructure, the Soviet state was able to collectivise Dolgan and Nganasan property in the 1930s. This was a difficult time, as it was all across the country, and many community leaders were arrested and executed in the purges, following their initial resistance (Ziker 2002a). After the Second World War, collectives (*kolkhozy*) were merged into larger productive units, such as *sovkhozy* (state farms), the Taimyrskii *gospromkhoz* (government hunting enterprise), and the Potapovskii OPKh (experimental hunting enterprise). Amalgamation of kolkhozy in the 1960s and 1970s was meant to increase the productive efficiency of local caribou hunting and fishing to provide food for the region's urban population in Dudinka and Noril'sk (Pavlov, Kuksov, and Savel'ev 1976; Sdobnikov 1958), where the mining and metallurgical industry became an operation of national military significance during the Cold War.

Succumbing to the 'rationalising' influence of the Communist Party, the Dolgan and Nganasan were settled in villages throughout the central Taimyr lowlands, and reindeer herding became an impediment to increasing production. The state enterprises there encouraged 'up-to-date' hunting and fishing techniques and organisation, relying largely upon mechanised transport. A fundamental element of indigenous property, domestic reindeer, which had generated food, clothing, shelter, and transportation for centuries, was only a memory by the mid-1970s. As part of the Soviet hunting and fishing industries, the Taimyrskii gospromkhoz in Ust'-Avam created work brigades and assigned them hunting territories, fishing spots, and other resources such as cabins, snowmobiles, steel traps, and fishnets. The regional food-producing enterprises promoted labour productivity through

brigade competitions with prizes as well as symbolic awards (*gramota*) and recognition in the media (see Kideckel 2002; Müller 2002).

In Ust'-Avam, each production brigade had a plan (*nariad*) for a certain amount of caribou meat, fish, or fur to be turned in to the enterprise. The rural enterprise system did not emphasise conservation but rather 'rational' use of resources (*ratsional'noe ispol'zovanie resursov*). Although yearly plans were formulated in consultation with the Institute for Agricultural Science of the Far North in Noril'sk, actual kills, which reached 100,000 caribou per year in the 1980s (Klokov and Sustrov 1999), far exceeded plans. The result was that caribou migrations in Taimyr changed, largely to avoid the upper Piasina River, where in many places the east bank was fenced in order to funnel the caribou towards slaughtering posts (*zaboinie tochki*). The Taimyr region's wild reindeer population was substantial enough to support this massive government-sponsored annual hunt, which utilised combustion-powered transportation by land, river, and air, the latest hunting and communications equipment, and multi-hundred-ton underground ice chambers carved out with drilling machines from the mines. The majority of households in the Ust'-Avam area depended upon salaries from the gospromkhoz, oriented to the production of meat, fish, fur, and artifices. Soviet development in the region led to repeated centralisation in settlement pattern, with part of the population, mostly male, spending three- to nine-month periods on the land engaged in *promysel,* or hunting, fishing, and trapping occupations, while children, women, and the elderly spent more time in the village. In several cases, Nganasan and Dolgan families continued to live most of the year in remote houses—for example, in the territories of Koral', Ugarnaia, and Letov'e (see map). More will be said later on the ownership and use of Ust'-Avam's hunting territories.

In the years following the Soviet collapse, the Dolgan and Nganasan have found themselves at the margin of an economy spiralling out of control with hyperinflation, privatisation of industry, and speculation. Because of the relatively high cost of maintaining remote communities under the free-market economy and limits on subsidies for the agricultural sector, production of food and fur for the larger economy has diminished. As a result, almost everyone involved in promysel has been, in effect, laid off, and the local hunting-fishing-trapping effort has been reoriented to local subsistence. Elsewhere (Ziker 2002b) I have described indigenous perceptions of this transition in Russia as perceptions of a 'survival economy' in which people make do the best they can and help local communities' less fortunate members. Particularly important for subsistence hunting has been the Ust'-Avam amateur hunting area, surrounding the village.

Property 'Solutions' and Social and Economic Entitlements

As Russia began to transform its economy into a free market in the 1990s, federal orders specified five paths of reorganisation for Russia's agricultural enterprises: (1) liquidating the enterprise; (2) making it the subsidiary of an industrial enterprise; (3) splitting the unit up into smaller units such as peasant farms (*krest'ianskoe-fermerskoe khoziaistvo*); (4) creating a joint-property agricultural enterprise (TOO, AO, or cooperative); and (5) keeping the existing form but re-registering it as group property (Van Atta 1993).[1] Because Soviet agricultural enterprises were the main sources of employment for the majority of indigenous Siberians, their liquidation, sale, or splitting up was a real threat to traditional lands and the livelihoods made there. A decree by President Yeltsin in 1992 was intended to help 'protect traditional territory and economic activities' of native Siberian minorities. The 1992 decree set up a private property 'solution' for protecting native Siberians, which mollified indigenous political leaders who were declaring goals of greater self-determination in native cultural, political, and economic affairs (Aipin 1994; Nenyang 1992; Pika and Prokhorov 1994; Sangi 1991, 1992). Yeltsin's 1992 decree set up a new property framework for native Siberians that promoted development but was still flexible enough in its organisation to allow for indigenous communal traditions. In this way, the new land categories were social and economic entitlements intended for a small minority of Russia's population. In reality, most of the productive land in Taimyr has remained under the control of the successors to state enterprises.

The 1992 decree did not allow for negotiation of regional land settlements with indigenous political associations. As Gail Fondahl and colleagues (2001: 550) describe for Sakha-Yakutia, land claims did 'not originate out of any notion of pre-existing aboriginal rights that were not extinguished or were not addressed in an existing treaty, but rather out of more general structural and economic reforms that valorise the relocation of decision making to units most informed about, and potentially affected by, such decisions'. In the Taimyr region, dependence on the regional administrations for financial support and office space limited the ability of the Association of Native Peoples of Taimyr to act as an independent agent in negotiating land allocations.

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[1] Such federal orders included Ukaz Prezidenta RF of 1991, 'O neotlozhnykh merakh po osushchestvleniiu zemel'noi reformy v RSFSR'; Postanovlenie Pravitel'stva RF of 19 December 1992, 'O poriadke reorganiztsii kolkhozov i sovkhozov'; and Polozhenie o reorganizatsii kolkhozov, sovkhozov i privatizatsii gosudarstvennykh sel'skokhoziaistvennykh predpriiatii', September 1992.

Following the 1992 decree, in the Taimyr region local legislation was passed that defined private (*lichnoe podsobnoe* and *krest'iansko-promyslovoe*), kin-based (*semeino-rodovoe*), and communally based (*obshchinno-rodovoe*) holdings (*khoziaistvo*). Moreover, local administrative documents, supported by regional legislation,[2] clearly assigned land along with the registration of these legal entities. By Dudinka District legislative decisions, family/clan or communal/clan holdings for indigenous families and associations were created and assigned land bases ranging from 1 hectare to 800,000 hectares.[3]

In practice, some people were able to create such native holdings more easily than others, simply because of their familiarity with bureaucratic matters or their residence in the regional capital (cf. King, this volume). In most cases, there seems to have been an inverse relationship between opportunities to create and use landholdings (implying familiarity with the capital and its institutions) and hunters' ability to spend time on the land. Only 48 family/clan/communal landholdings were formed in the Taimyr region between the 1992 presidential decree and the spring of 1997. Most of the people who created these and other holdings lived in the Taimyr region's urban centres. Many fewer family/clan/communal holdings were located in and around the 17 villages, where most of the native population lives.

Patron-client relations may have been a factor in some cases. Relatives living in the city or unrelated middlemen, usually non-natives, could take care of most of the paperwork connected with forming the family/clan/communal holding, as well as make promises with regard to matters of supply and marketing of produce, leaving the hunter and his family in the

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[2] For example, the decision of the Soviet of Peoples Deputies of the Taimyr Autonomous Region 'about the programme of development of village and hunting/trapping farms of the region in the conditions of transition of the economy onto market relations' (25 December 1991) had the goal of increasing responsibility for the condition, protection, and rational use of hunting and trapping resources, and several small-scale companies were allocated land in reference to this decision. Later, holdings were issued under the decision of the Malyi Soviet of the regional Soviet of Peoples' Deputies no. 4 (22 January 1993), 'A temporary order for allotting [*zakrepleniia*] holdings and granting [*predostavlenie*] lands in the boundaries of territories of living and economic activities of small-numbering peoples in the Taimyr Autonomous Region'.

[3] Family/clan and communal/clan holdings had both an indigenous identity and a kinship element in their organisation; some incorporated a number of families engaged in promysel. The organiser or organisers of the holding were required to maintain contacts with government offices in the capital for regulatory and financial purposes, and the products of hunting and fishing were to be sold in urban markets or kept for private (*svoi*) use. Thus, the organisation of these holdings was flexible enough to encompass both small businesses and extended family economies, or homesteads. The political rationale behind the allocation of these holdings was self-determination and sustainability of indigenous economic practices, including reindeer herding and other traditional forms of food production.

tundra to do the work of production. Although in theory such intermediating relationships should have been just what were needed for the success of landholding units in remote areas, the arrangements were often unbalanced, especially those which involved non-local entrepreneurs as the middlemen. In some cases the relationships turned sour, when the middleman made a quick profit and departed the region, and the hunter was left out in the cold, so to speak. At that point, there was no option other than to re-create an economic relationship with the state enterprise. When middlemen were relatives living in the city or native people in positions allowing for frequent travel to the city, the relationships were more successful.

Proximity to the Taimyr's urban centres facilitated access to services, markets, and government, which helped in maintaining administrative requirements and in making a profit on private sales of meat, fish, or furs. The distribution and growth of family/clan/communal holdings in the Taimyr region should be understood politically. Early on in the process, such holdings, incorporated as legal indigenous enterprises, were awarded 'Government Acts', which conferred rights to hunting and fishing land as lifelong-inheritable property (*pozhiznenno-nasleduemoe vladenie*). Later in the 1990s, the region favoured five- and ten-year renewable leases (*arenda*). The Dudinka mayor cited the comparative ease of reallocation as the main reason for favouring leases. To many natives it is more than ironic that they must lease their traditional land from the government. The holders of family/clan/communal land were granted rights to 'rationally use' renewable game and fish resources on their holdings. While on the surface this seemed reasonable, in fact it provided a loophole for reallocation of indigenous hunting land, particularly if it could be demonstrated that resources went unused.

The situation was similar for non-native newcomers (*priezhie*) and Sibiriaki (Russian Siberians), who were also involved in the fish and game industry. Twenty-nine non-natives were able to form peasant hunting holdings (*krest'iansko-promyslovoe khoziaistvo*), and they, too, were assigned land. The land assigned to non-native hunters in the form of peasant hunting holdings was also asymmetrically distributed throughout the region, with a bias towards the urban centres. The region required the peasant hunters to have ten years experience in promysel, whereas five years was the requirement for heads of native family/clan/communal holdings. There were other, more restrictive requirements for the peasant hunting holdings as well. For example, they were required to pay nominal fees for the land they leased, even though land taxes had been banned by Yeltsin's 1992 decree on immediate measures for indigenous Siberians. The result was that peasant hunting holdings were more clearly oriented towards business than towards domestic

production or homesteading. A few non-indigenous personal plots (*lichnoe podsobnoe khoziaistvo*) were created, and the region allocated ten plots, generally 1 to 15 hectares relatively close to the city, which were used for subsistence fishing and hunting.

Creating the family/clan/communal holdings and claiming land did not necessarily provide an advantage for indigenous hunters in an economic sense. I asked heads of such holdings and gospromkhoz hunters in Ust'-Avam about why they had decided to make the land claim or not. Hunters felt there would be little advantage to establishing the private holding, whereas there would be a lot of cost and effort (Ziker 2002b). The major players involved in allocating land were all located in Dudinka, including the Taimyr regional land committee, the Dudinka city land committee, the hunters union, the tax authority, the Association of Peoples of Taimyr, the city council, and the regional legislature. All of these organisations had to be approached and negotiated with, and their signed approval, or a contract, was required to create any type of holding. The police (*militsia*), from whom permission to own a firearm was obtained and with whom residence was registered, also played a role. Those who did establish holdings generally did so to gain independence from state enterprises or to make a better life for themselves (Ziker 2002b). Although some of those with good access to markets have been able to make ends meet, none has become wealthy.

Creating a private landholding was often interpreted as a kind of business that, in effect, took land and resources out of state enterprise control. Officials running the successors to the sovkhozy and gospromkhoz were known to view inquiries or requests to claim land unfavourably. In addition, few people employed as hunters wanted to cut off all means of support from the state enterprises, which minimally provided eligibility for pensions upon retirement and maximally provided irregular supplies and rare opportunities to turn in surpluses for assurances of cash. In fact, hunters wishing to create holdings and claim land were required to quit their jobs at the state enterprise. Creating a family/clan/communal holding was locally interpreted as 'taking one's share from the collective' (*vydelit'sia*). Some of the native or Russian heads of these holdings were referred to disparagingly as *fermery* (farmers) or *arendatory* (renters). This created a dynamic that prevented most hunters living in remote villages from creating holdings and taking land out of the collective.

There were cases in which the creation of a family/clan/communal holding was clearly part of a local political struggle, with little benefit to those involved. In the sovkhoz Tukhard, nine extended families of Nenets reindeer herders took their shares in reindeer and entered an association of family enterprises, which received pastures in the area and had the right to

sell reindeer products. The head of this association was a non-native former professional in the sovkhoz Tukhard who wanted to create his own distribution and marketing network. The remainder of the reindeer herders in Tukhard continued to work through the state enterprise in their previous brigade territory. Three years later, in 1997, when I visited Tukhard, the mayor told me, 'Horseradish is no sweeter than turnips'. This Russian proverb appropriately described how those who joined the association of family/clan holdings were indistinguishable, in terms of their economic situation, from those who remained with the sovkhoz. The same could be said for the majority of those in such rural settings in Taimyr.

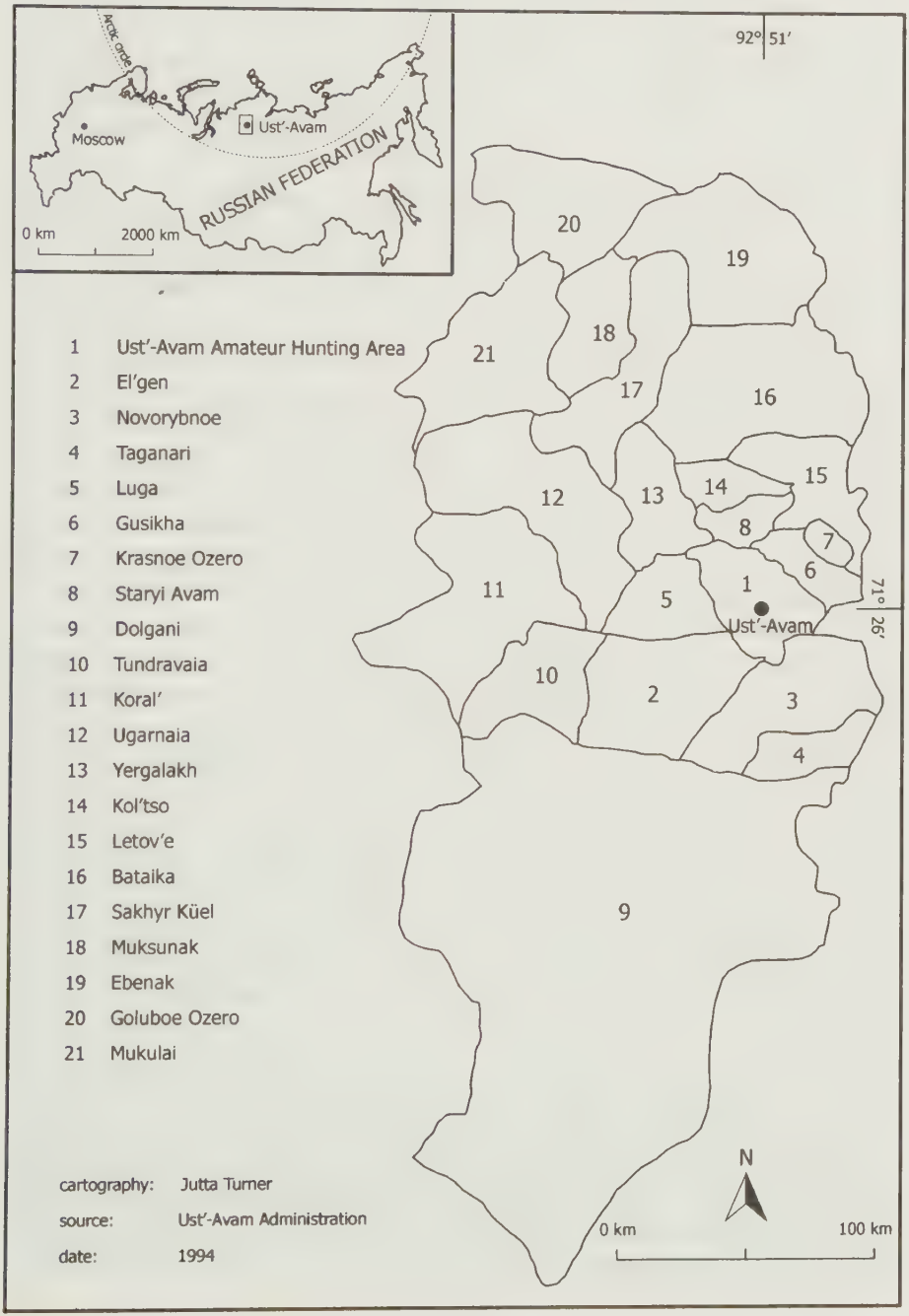
In 1997 I reviewed 170 resolutions (*postanovlenie*) of the city of Dudinka that related to land allocation; these are summarised in Table 12.1. Most of these decisions (141) dealt with what I designate productive land. Productive land is territory that provides some access to important renewable resources, such as fish, deer, fur bearers, and wild plants, which are used for household subsistence, sale, or both. Of the 141 allocations of productive land, 80 were made to non-indigenous organisations and holdings, and 48 (more than one-third) were made to indigenous holdings. This fact is significant, because the indigenous population of the region is 21% of the total population. The statistic provides some evidence for the interpretation that family/clan/communal holdings are a form of social entitlement. As mentioned earlier, 29 allocations were made to peasant hunting holdings, and 10 acts allocated land as personal plots. So 39 allocations were made to non-native people working or living on the land. The remaining 41 allocations of productive land were made to the Noril'sk fish processing plant and, later, to an entrepreneurial middleman who took control of a number of these fishing spots (*tochki*) with access to Noril'sk in the Piasina watershed. Existing political and economic connections appear to have been fundamental determinants in the allocation of productive land for all of these categories.

Moreover, 29 acts allocated parcels, mostly under three hectares, for various industrial and social purposes, such as a reconnaissance base for the Taimyrskii geophysical expedition, a new electrical generating station for the village of Volochanka, new schools in villages, and vacation bases for organisations in Dudinka and Noril'sk. Again, social and political considerations provided the justification for these land allocations. Seven acts returned land previously allocated to organisations or holdings back to the district's 'fund of redistribution', controlled by the land committee. In reality, the regional government is the ultimate owner of these lands. Four allocations were re-registrations or reclassifications, such as a change from peasant hunting holdings to family/clan/communal holdings.

Table 12.1.: Allocations of land to types of organizations and enterprises in the Taimyr Autonomous Region, 1992 through first quarter 1997.

Year	Personal plots	Schools, industrial land, plots for rest bases	Family/clan holdings by proximity to Dudinka and Noril'sk		Communal clan holdings by proximity to Dudinka and Noril'sk		Peasant-hunting holdings	Fishing bases	Fund of redistri-bution	Registra-tions to enter-prises	Sum
			close	distant	close	distant					
1992	1	5	0	1	1	0	10	0	0	0	18
1993	2	4	2	2	4	3	4	22	1	2	46
1994	0	6	12	1	3	4	3	2	3	2	36
1995	4	9	4	4	1	0	5	1	3	2	33
1996	3	5	2	1	1	1	5	16	0	0	34
1997	0	0	0	1	0	0	2	0	0	0	3
Total	10	29	20	10	10	8	29	41	7	6	170
Sub-totals:											
Productive lands	10	0	20	10	10	8	29	41	7	6	141
Indigenous	0	0	20	10	10	8	0	0	0	0	48
Non-indigenous	10	0	0	0	0	0	29	41	0	0	80
Government and social sector	0	29	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	0	0
Successor state enterprises	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	6

Hunting territories of the Ust'-Avam subdivision of the *gospromkhoz* Taimyrskii, 1994



In addition to their role in recent formal property claims, the local state enterprises (sovkhozy, gospromkhoz, *rybzavod,* etc.) and their successors continue to play an important role in local economics and social organisation (see Gray 2001; Stammler and Ventsel, this volume). In the late socialist period, hunting grounds and the capital invested in them were assigned to brigades, and production flows were turned in to the gospromkhoz according to a brigade's plan and the competitions in which members were involved. The assigned territories (see map, territories 2 through 21) were not private in the Western sense, because the brigadiers had no right of disposal or transfer of the property. Upon the dissolution of a brigade, the gospromkhoz would reallocate the territory, a local version of the district's system of reallocation. I was told that a brigadier was, in effect, a caretaker (*khoziain*) of gospromkhoz land, property, and production stream. The gospromkhoz could administer punishment, such as deductions in pay, or legally prosecute those found guilty of irresponsible (irrational) use or loss of property and hunted and fished resources. One type of irrational use was keeping resources *dlia sebia,* for family consumption.[4] Despite the potentially transitory nature of assigned territories, hunters had strong positive feelings towards their hunting grounds. Just about everyone had ancestral ties to the Avam tundra. Hunters have, in effect, inherited the resources assigned to them in the socialist period, and they can now pass these on to their sons.

Some elements of continuity in the relationship between the brigades and the successor to the gospromkhoz, now called the '*promkhoz* Taimyrskii' (simply, the hunting enterprise Taimyrskii), are observable. During the 'golden era' of the 1980s, brigades received one ton of gasoline per hunter and enough coal to heat their cabins for the winter—especially important in the hunting grounds north of the tree line—in order for them to fulfil their plans, which were meticulously accounted. The relationship between the brigades and the enterprise degenerated in the late 1990s, when fuel shipments to Ust'-Avam became sporadic; payments to hunters were delayed, with suspicions of manipulation by the enterprise's accountants. In recent years (2000–2001), with a new director, the promkhoz has increased fuel shipments to Ust'-Avam, and hunters are again receiving fuel, although not

[4] During the Soviet era, an especially prominent form of irrational use was keeping fox pelts for trade *na levo* (on the left). Of course, some barter did occur, as it did elsewhere in the informal Soviet economy, which operated in parallel with the formal economy (Humphrey 1983). Fox pelts were a contentious resource because of their high value and the ease with which they could be hidden in baggage. The controversy over fox pelts has a deep history in the region, going back to collectivisation years, when it was one of the causes of a regional rebellion (Ziker 2002a: 66–80). Later, kolkhoz and even *gospromkhoz priemniki* (those accepting the pelts) were reputed to downgrade the quality of pelts in order to pay the hunters less.

at socialist-subsidised levels. There are now no production plans, but hunters are turning in meat and fish and receiving payments more regularly. For example, in hunting territories Elgen (number 2) and Ugarnaia (number 12), wild reindeer shot in October 2001 were picked up by promkhoz helicopters in early November to be sold in Noril'sk. Hunters there were expecting remuneration sometime in the winter. Although such a relationship was conceived of as turning meat and fish in 'by contract', in fact there were no written contracts, only receipts for the amount of meat and fish taken by the promkhoz and assurances of payment according to a set price per kilogram.

In addition to the assigned hunting territories, Ust'-Avam had its own amateur hunting ground (*liubitel'skaia ugod'ia*) surrounding the village and following the rivers for approximately 15 kilometres (territory number 1, see map). This area was available for hunting, fishing, and trapping to all members of the community who were not employed in the state enterprise as hunters and fishers, as well as those employed but not turning in meat and fish by contract. During the Soviet period, hunting was allowed so long as hunters obtained licenses and permission to use firearms. Most of this hunting served family subsistence (the equivalent of private plots in Russian farming communities). Access to the amateur hunting grounds and fishing spots was unconstrained, and many non-native newcomer men and the elderly used the area. As fuel supplies to Ust'-Avam dwindled in the 1990s, promkhoz hunters as well as amateur hunters, youths, and the elderly began to use the amateur hunting grounds surrounding Ust'-Avam more intensively. Those who had received some fuel from the promkhoz or purchased it from the barge captains who made supply runs in the summer were able to travel farther, especially along the Dudypta River, which cuts across the area from east to west. The hunting territories along the Dudypta included Letov'e (number 15), Krasnoe Ozero (number 7), Gusikha (number 6), Staryi Avam (number 8), Yergalakh (number 13), Ugarnaia (number 12), and Koral' (number 11), as well as the amateur hunting area (number 1).

In the late 1990s, the area under common use expanded, because two assigned territories were abandoned or, more precisely, left unassigned to other staff hunters when the brigades disbanded and brigade members gave up exclusive access to these areas. At Staryi Avam (number 8), the hunter assigned to the territory passed away. In the other case, the non-native brigadier who worked seasonally at the Gusikha slaughtering post (number 6) did not return after the 1996 season. The gospromkhoz theoretically could have reassigned these open territories and the capital equipment and buildings on them to brigades comprising other hunters in Ust'-Avam. Rather, it left them unassigned until recently. The house at Staryi Avam was renovated in 2001 and is now inhabited more or less permanently. The couple who live there

have no obligation to turn products in to the state enterprise, but they have a large extended family and a production plan of their own. They could theoretically organise and claim the territory under the regional regulations for forming family/clan holdings. However, the absence of paperwork does not prevent them from hunting and fishing there. In the meantime, many of the effectively unemployed hunters of Ust'-Avam visit Staryi Avam, as well as Gusikha, and the importance of these areas for communal use has increased. At Gusikha, the son of the brigadier who left in 1996 came in 2001 to form a new brigade, but this use is limited to the August and September caribou hunt along the Dudypta River, adjacent to the post. The rest of the year, the territory and the buildings at Gusikha are used for subsistence hunting and fishing (Table 12.2).

Table 12.2: Hierarchy of Rights Holders over the Gusikha Hunting Grounds, with Concomitant Domain of Rights

Holder	Domain
Dudinka District	Allocates all hunting grounds to organisations and monitors their use
Promkhoz Taimyrskii	Assigns hunting grounds to brigades and garners produce
Gusikha Brigade (August–September)	Smallest formal unit of production
Ust'-Avam subsistence hunters	Household production with community entitlement

Similar multiple forms of property are found elsewhere in the area. The brigade at El'gen (number 2) continued to be directed by the Elogir' family, my hosts in Ust'-Avam since 1994. They managed to turn in to the promkhoz a good number of caribou killed during the October 'land' hunt every year throughout the 1990s, although they kept significant amounts *dlia sebia,* which was not allowed before 1991. The borders of the territory adjacent to the amateur hunting area have softened to some extent in recent years, and more hunters are travelling through El'gen more often to get to other territories, such as Dolgani (number 9).

Novorybnoe (number 3) was used mainly *dlia sebia* throughout the 1990s. In addition to the hunters officially assigned to the Novorybnoe brigade, a number of friends of the brigadier have been hunting there for their own family subsistence. In 2002, the brigadier left his office job in the village and resumed full-time hunting at Novorybnoe. Taganari (number 4) was in a situation similar to Novorybnoe's in the 1990s, and it continues to be used mainly for family subsistence.

Throughout the 1990s and up to the present, two elderly brothers and their sons used the Luga territory (number 5) *dlia sebia* exclusively. Ust'-Avam hunters have reportedly encroached on the eastern border of Luga for their own subsistence hunting. The Luga hunters have not turned products in to the promkhoz for many years.

Krasnoe Ozero (number 7) was the location of a house in which two families lived. The cabin burned down before my first visit to Ust'-Avam in 1994, although the hunters who lived there visit infrequently during the summer for subsistence hunting and fishing. The area has, to a lesser extent than Staryi Avam (number 8), passed into the common hunting area for all community hunters.

Territory number 9, Dolgani, provides a poignant example of the difficulties with postsocialist property reform in Taimyr. Dolgani was the home of a trading post along the Dudinka-Khatanga reindeer trail going back to the nineteenth century. The authorities closed the Dolgani post in 1955 and moved it downriver to Novorybnoe, where it existed until the 1971 founding of Ust'-Avam. In 1994, the mayor of Ust'-Avam developed the idea of re-creating the old trading post and moving those who wished to go there to live. The communal/clan holding Dolgani was created in 1994, including three distantly related families. It was headed by the father of the mayor of Ust'-Avam, who was in his seventies. The district granted the new holding just under 800,000 hectares of land. Most of the Dolgani territory had previously been classified as a faunal reproductive area (*uchastok vosproizvodstva*) within the gospromkhoz.

The problem was organising production in the territory and providing housing at Dolgani. No one moved there, even though the area was rich with streams and forests bordering the attractive foothills of the Putorana Plateau. The mayor's two brothers were hunters employed by the gospromkhoz. Their assigned hunting territory was a smaller parcel in the north-east corner of the Dolgani territory, also called Dolgani. The mayor and his father did not hunt, and the other three families included in the holding had no men who were active hunters. The brothers of the mayor refused to quit their jobs, so they could not officially join the holding, according to regulations. They told me that they did not want to suffer the potential loss of access to

gospromkhoz resources in exchange for the uncertain benefits of the private holding. But because their territory had been taken out of the gospromkhoz, their status was somewhat uncertain. As a result, they rarely visited their hunting territory but began to hunt more in the amateur hunting grounds. The mayor moved to Dudinka in 1998, and his father subsequently passed away. As a result, the Dolgani territory was used mostly by Ust'-Avam hunters on subsistence forays, especially in the early spring for caribou and in April for thin ice fishing.

In 1998, another family created a family/clan holding, called Chopko, and made a counterclaim on land in the western area of Dolgani along the Chopko River. The district split up the Dolgani territory and reallocated the land in the west to the Chopko holding. However, because of the distance to the village, the cost of fuel, and the need to organise the transportation and marketing of goods produced, as of 2001 the Chopko hunters had not utilised the land either. Rather, some members continue to use their promkhoz hunting territory, which is closer to the village, and other members use a post on the Dudypta River within the amateur hunting area.

The distance from the village to Tundravaia (number 10) was also an obstacle for its two brigade members in the 1990s. They preferred to travel to areas along the Dudypta River, participating in the fall on-water caribou slaughter for the promkhoz. They also hunted in the amateur hunting area rather than visit their territory. Tundravaia also had a slaughtering post on the Dudypta, but it fell into disuse in the late 1980s, and spring floods had reduced it to rubble by 1997.

Koral' (number 11) was another of the territories that straddled the Dudypta River, and the cabin, on a high southern bank, was as close to the small community of Kresty (to the west) as it was to Ust'-Avam. Two hunters and their families lived at Koral', except for their school-age children, who lived during the school year at the boarding school in Ust'-Avam. Koral' hunters worked mainly to fulfil their families' subsistence needs. They made infrequent trips to Ust'-Avam to receive social welfare payments and purchase supplies. They turned in meat, fish, and furs to the promkhoz infrequently during the 1990s, although they would like to produce more. The promkhoz has not asked them to do so, and they are unable to organise transportation and marketing on their own.

Ugarnaia (number 12) was in a situation similar to that of Koral'. Its four-apartment house was on the Dudypta River, which eased travel back and forth from the village, especially in the summer. An extended family lived there most of the year, hunting and fishing mainly for family subsistence. In 2001, they turned in 30 caribou to the promkhoz.

Yergalakh (number 13) was also home to four families. Its cabin, too, was located on the Dudypta River, but closer to Ust'-Avam. Family subsistence was the main focus for hunters there. A number of friends of the Yergalakh hunters regularly visited. Several friends participated in the spring 2001 caribou hunt, along with the Yergalakh hunters, and the crew turned the velvet antlers in to the promkhoz. As of my departure in November 2001, no one had yet been paid.

Kol'tso (number 14) was located north of the tree line and was used every fall for subsistence hunting and fishing.

Letov'e (number 15) had a large slaughtering post on the high south bank of the Dudypta, as well as a four-family house a short distance from the post. The families who lived at Letov'e hunted in the various seasons for family subsistence and turned in a small quantity of meat and fish every year in the 1990s. Most production occurred during the August–September period, when the non-native brigadier and a number of hunters flew in from Noril'sk. The Letov'e slaughtering brigade produced at least 1,000 caribou every year throughout the 1990s. The meat was stored in the underground ice chamber below the slaughtering post until barges were sent to transport it back to Noril'sk before the river froze. Letov'e residents produced much less than the slaughtering brigade but also worked in the brigade in the ice chamber and as butchers during the 1990s. In 2001, the brigadier decided to include Letov'e residents, men in their twenties, in the slaughtering brigade as hunters, which entitled them to an equal share of the cash brought in for the season, a development viewed positively.

Bataika (number 16) was located north of the tree line. The territory had a two-family house. Its two hunters and their sons worked together for most hunting and fishing, although each family had its own set of trap lines, as was the practice in other territories. The Bataika brigade specialised in fish and Arctic fox production. In the 1990s, the promkhoz had little interest in collecting these products from Bataika and other territories that were not on the major waterways. As a result, Batiaka has been used mainly for subsistence hunting, and the hunters spend significantly less time there than they did in the 1980s.

Sakhyr Küel (number 17) occupies a similar situation, although hunters were dropped off by helicopter in the fall of 2001 and 2002 for the winter fishing season. The territory has been transferred to the eldest son of the previous brigadier, and the promkhoz appeared interested in collecting the high-quality whitefish caught on the lake.

Muksunak (number 18) is more than 100 kilometres from Ust'-Avam, north of the tree line. The Muksunak brigade produced fish and Arctic fox furs during the 1980s. In the 1990s, the two hunters in the Muksunak brigade

began to visit their territory less often, and they have developed other options for hunting closer to the village in the amateur hunting territory and at Staryi Avam.

Ebenak (number 19) was also more than 100 kilometres from Ust'-Avam. The Ebenak brigade, comprising my good friends Ilya and Valodya Bezrukikh, turned in 102 Arctic fox pelts to the promkhoz in March and April 1995. Their receipts showed that they received ten barrels of gasoline in October for the next season's winter fishing and trapping (Ziker 1998). Since then, the brothers have received virtually nothing from the promkhoz office, and their snowmobiles have broken down. Ilya walked to the cabin at Ebenak in the spring of 2001, fished there, and pulled back as much fish as he could on a sleigh before the ice broke. This fish was intended to be *dlia sebia*—Ilya and Valodya have one of the largest extended families in Ust'-Avam. Territory Goluboe Ozero (number 20) was assigned to Valodya Bezrukikh, but a cabin was never built there. Taken together, Ebenak and Goluboe Ozero encompassed over 200,000 hectares. Goluboe Ozero was not really accessible, however. The brothers' strong feelings for Ebenak probably help motivate their will to use the territory, even without the aid of mechanised transport. In November 2001, the promkhoz dropped Ilya off at Ebenak by helicopter and supplied the cabin with some coal, so he could put lines in under the ice in preparation for winter fishing. Ilya was hopeful that the promkhoz would again begin accepting fish from Ebenak.

Mukulai (number 21), also north of the tree line, was home to a Russian couple who lived there and worked for the promkhoz until their retirement. The Mukulai brigade produced fish and Arctic fox pelts. As of 2001, the territory had been abandoned.

Hunters had strong positive feelings towards their hunting grounds. The Bezrukikh brothers referred to their hunting grounds lightheartedly as 'The Country Ebenak'. Feelings for hunting territories are intensified by naming and by personal experiences on the land. For example, in 1996 the Bezrukikhs renamed a lake, previously called Second Lake (beyond Lake Ebenak), after I helped put in and check fishnets. Now, Second Lake is called 'John-Ozero' (John's Lake). I cannot wait to go back. Ancestral ties to the Avam tundra are perpetuated among Ust'-Avam hunters by, for example, the de facto transfer of the Sakhyr Küel territory and the El'gen territory to the eldest sons of previous brigadiers. The promkhoz Taimyrskii began to act less like a total social institution in the 1990s and to be more of a middleman, limiting its function to supplies, wholesale transactions, and contracts with hunters. Still, the promkhoz cannot fulfil this function for everyone, and it appears that only the hunters with the closest relationships to the

promkhoz manager in Ust'-Avam, as well as to promkhoz officials in Noril'sk, have been allotted supplies and transportation.

The discussion of each of Ust'-Avam's hunting-brigade territories shows that the promkhoz has relaxed its system of territory allocation in the postsocialist period and allowed alternative uses. Of the 20 staff hunting territories, 5 are being used mainly for subsistence hunting and fishing, if at all, whereas before 1991 they were sites for active production brigades. A number of families occupy five territories along the main waterways, where they practice subsistence production and, in one case (Letov'e), participate in a slaughtering brigade. This occupation is possible because the promkhoz barges pass these spots on their summer supply runs to Ust'-Avam and Letov'e. The barges briefly stop at remote houses to drop off coal and fuel. Territories more distant from the river are used less often now than during the 1980s and very early 1990s. Indeed, four territories have been abandoned. During the Soviet period, keeping resources for family consumption (*dlia sebia*) was considered irrational use, as it represented *natural'noe khoziaistvo* (the domestic mode of production). In the postsocialist period, the promkhoz significantly limited its production goals and thereby relaxed its day-to-day management of these territories. Four territories are being used for contract hunting alongside family subsistence hunting and fishing. Two territories include slaughtering bases for the on-water caribou hunt. Overall, the promkhoz has maintained title to all territories but the Dolgani (and now the Chopko) territory.

In the mid- to late 1990s, the prevalent view about the promkhoz was that its unstated policy was 'live as you like' (*zhite, kak khotite*). After decades of Soviet micro-management, hunters and their families felt they could pretty much take whatever decisions they wished with regard to land tenure, but at the same time, they felt disappointed by the decreasing levels of investment in their community. Hunting skill was rewarded during the Soviet period, and the best hunters were given assignments as brigadiers of a hunting territory, following the socialist logic for increasing production. Today, hunting experience is still required to inherit a promkhoz hunting territory, as well as to claim land in the region. However, contacts and bureaucratic skill are even more important. The difference is that people were assigned to the land during the Soviet period, but in the postsocialist period the land is assigned to people, either through claims, pre-existing relationships, or local entitlements.

Kinship and Entitlements

Within the grim reality of Taimyr's remote native communities in the 1990s, with decreasing subsidies to state enterprises and little benefit to surplus

production, few people have claimed private hunting grounds. Rather, communal forms of property with informal organisation have been developing, along with supplemental contract hunting for the promkhoz. With the loss of government subsidies and jobs in the post-Soviet period, the community moral economy appears to provide a minimal standard of living for community members: hunting, fishing, and trapping, along with minimal non-local inputs, mean that everyone, including the elderly and invalids, has enough traditional food to eat. Food is shared in complex networks of kin, friends, and people who ask for it. Entitlements to such communal property manifest themselves on a number of levels.

The entitlements underpinning the moral economy vary significantly within the community. Formulations and adherence to specific values vary among families, between the Dolgan and the Nganasan, between both of these and non-natives, and between generations. Families and subgroups in Ust'-Avam often disagree, and specifics may be limited to one family. Entitlements are claimed strategically. Whether one is known to accept a particular value may be cited as a reason to support a person's entitlement.

One example, for which I have described the underlying logical processes in detail elsewhere (Ziker 2002a: 125–49), is the concept of the 'law of the tundra', as Ust'-Avam residents put it. First, hunters must not overuse the tundra's resources. Elders have told members of the present generation, on behalf of the ancestors, that the 'essences' of the tundra, or spirits of dead ancestors, will punish those who hunt too much.[5] Here, morality is expressed in terms of kinship and cosmology. The early death of a hunter who was known for killing more than he needed, or the misfortune of a hunter's relative, is taken as evidence of supernatural reckoning for overhunting. In this way, the law of the tundra is a powerful metaphor used by elderly Dolgan and Nganasan to encourage sharing and to discourage self-aggrandising behaviour among those who normally cooperate, particularly offspring and friends.

The second element in the law of the tundra is reciprocity. Hunters should be hospitable to one another and help one another with regard to food, effort, and goods such as spare parts, especially when they are on the road or when one has not made contact with other hunters at an appointed time. In the latter case, this almost always means that the person's transpor-

[5] Compare this with David Anderson's description of the 'sentient ecology' of the Evenki of Khantaiskoe Ozero (Anderson 2000: 116–47). There, the tundra is a brazen, non-human person that allows people with the requisite knowledge and ability to access 'her' resources. Know-how is an entitlement to property (Anderson 1998). Similarly, David Koester (2002: 60) contrasts imitative and artistic forms of interaction with the environment against so-called traditional ecological knowledge.

tation has broken down and he is stranded somewhere. People feel they must look after one another in the tundra.

A related tradition, also relevant to directions of change in property relations in the Dolgan and Nganasan community, has to do with sacred sites. A belief in sacred places is widespread among the native people of Siberia. It is said that it is important to make a sacrifice, such as a bullet, some coins, or some buttons, to a new place upon arrival. If the sacrifice is not made, it is said that the hunting or fishing will not be productive and that something bad may happen to the people. The law of the tundra and symbolic sacrifices to the tundra are examples of ancestral encouragement of proper relations among co-descendants and community members with regard to drawing resources from the land.

Another way in which ancestors channel the behaviour of the living through elders is through communication of the supernatural consequences of improper practice, something akin to the concept of sin (*ani* in Dolgan). Ani can be big or small. If something is moved when it should not be, this is ani. If something is stolen, there was ani. One should not step on a deer hide, or it is an ani. Improper behaviour is often interpreted as ani. Who defines what is proper? The Dolgan have their customs, they say, elders reiterate what is ani, and the parents of today's children repeat such formulations.[6] Kinship is the main relation through which education in these values occurs.

Nganasan concepts of nature and person are also relational and 'karmic', as they are among the Dolgan. For example, a man finds a stone in the internal organs of a fish he has caught. This unusual event is taken to mean that the Sea-mother, the highest Nganasan deity, selected him and gave him her 'child, which is continuously connected with her' (Gracheva 1983:54). The hunter dresses the stone with clothes, which his wife sews, providing a connection to her. The stone is fed, carried along in a special sled, and covered with furs. This 'child' is always with the hunter and his family, sharing with them its life. Nganasan concepts of nature and person show us the importance of fictive kinship with the environment as the people conceptualise their connections to it and follow the implications of those connections. The ultimate owner is the Sea-mother. The people are allowed to possess resources so long as they treat them correctly, which includes sharing them.

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[6] Interestingly, during the Socialist period, cosmological principles were used to explain the contrasting fortunes of members of brigades. For example, when the Dolgan still had domestic reindeer, a brigadier refused to follow the advice of a dying shaman—not to pass by her grave for three years—in order to drive the herd most directly across the river to new pasture. The brigadier's wife died in childbirth soon after the river crossing. Years later, during the brigadier's eulogy, the kolkhoz director, a Russian, valorised the brigadier's sacrifice of his wife in the interests of the kolkhoz.

Food sharing remains a path by which the Dolgan and Nganasan manifest entitlements to resources and thus a minimum quality of life and household viability. Food and other products are distributed widely through social networks within the community, but most food is reserved for closely related people and friends (Ziker 2002c). A number of hunters stated to me that if they did not give food to other people, then successful hunting in the future would be jeopardised. 'It is that kind of nature', said one hunter. Many types of people are included in the distribution networks: relatives, friends, pensioners, single mothers, and other people who request help. Because it is usually raw food products that are distributed, accumulation by any one household is limited. Most food is given voluntarily. When a hunter kills a caribou, he usually brings it back to his wife or his parents, who redistribute it to relatives and friends in their network, especially to those who have no active hunters in their house. Occasionally, people stop by a house and ask for food. Information about who procured what spreads rapidly in the village, and some small amount is usually given to anyone who asks for help—a community membership entitlement.

An important issue is the sustainability of the traditions that mediate resource use in the Ust'-Avam community. These traditions are crucial to a minimum quality of life and therefore to community viability in an unpredictable economic environment. However, community members theoretically can threaten communal and multiple forms of property. Garrett Hardin's (1968) 'tragedy of the commons' is premised on neoclassical assumptions about the economic nature of individuals. Its main assumptions are that individuals are self-interested and self-aggrandising rational calculators who pursue the maximisation of *satisfactions* or *utility*. Hardin's model assumes that where there is an open-access, common-property resource, each individual will maximise his or her self-interest but will not consider costs unpaid, or 'externalities' (see Wiber 2000 for critique). Individual actors enter into competitive utilisation of the common resource because the costs associated with exploitation are minimal, which leads to the resource's degradation, particularly in an open-access area. Hardin suggests that either private property or state control is required to avoid the tragedy.

Rather than view the commons as a resource or territory susceptible to human foibles, Stephen Gudeman (2001) suggests that the commons, or 'base', is that which is produced and shared by the community. Allocated and apportioned through social relationships, the commons in this view is what structures and enables access to resources—it is the community's shared interests and values. If this is in fact the case, then the tragedy of the commons occurs with the disintegration of such social relationships, rather than with the inevitable exhaustion of non-private or non-state resources.

Wayne Allen (1998) shows evidence for the breakdown in traditional relations accompanying changes in large-game hunting patterns in a Canadian subarctic community. In the Russian North, the breakdown and replacement of Soviet patterns of organisation and management are having an opposite effect. Communities appear to be restructuring their commons as a response to vagaries in the larger economy.

The organisation of informal entitlements to resources among Dolgan and Nganasan is relevant to discussions of whether indigenous hunters and gatherers can sustain strategies of resource use based on principles of non-private property ownership. Opportunities to obtain private family hunting territories have been open to the Dolgan and Nganasan since 1992. Very few have made private property their goal. As shown in the first part of the chapter, private property solutions are linked more to the political economy of the district than to local concerns. Access to resources on the local level is defined by two complementary sets of entitlements. The first set is the more formal and dirigiste, related to Soviet-era management schemes, which carry on in weakened form. The second has to do with ancestral strategies encouraging cooperation among co-descendants and neighbours, such as the 'law of the tundra', sin (*ani*), and implicit ecological cosmology. The acceptance and communication of these formulations symbolise willingness for future cooperation, and there is a built-in mechanism of perpetuation: ancestors require living elders to educate their children in these ways.[7] That such traditional entitlements are advanced and have invigorated local social relations after years of socialist education and employment speaks to the prospects of community sustainability based on such internal solutions to problems of resource access.

External factors such as weather may limit for short periods the geographical area in which hunting or fishing can occur. Such limitations can lead to short-term pressure on the commons or to disputes about access to resources. An example is the fishing that occurs on the Avam River directly adjacent to the village at the end of summer, before the river freezes. At that time, it is difficult for anyone to travel anywhere, so fishing is concentrated near the village. In 2001, a few elders complained to me that adolescents (most likely) had checked their nets or pulled them out of the water. Beyond the unpleasant personal implications, I understood this to mean that common property values were under strain. The offenders were unlikely to have been these elders' own children or grandchildren.

[7] Compare this with Barnard's (2002) 'foraging mode of thought' and Peterson's (2002) 'domestic moral economy' for models that explain the perpetuation of hunter-gatherer traditions after incorporation into industrial states.

To some extent this problem was due to the relatively novel situation of living in a recently built village, where summer social activities for children were no longer organised by the authorities. With nothing else to do while school was out of session, unsupervised groups of children ran around the village virtually all night. The pulling of elders' fishnets appeared to be a serious challenge to traditional entitlements, because it evidenced generational divergence. But these acts were also grounds for learning. Elders were openly communicating the negative supernatural implications of such immoral acts. Misfortunes and bad luck would follow from these misdeeds, according to the logic of the traditional cosmology, and the younger generation learned this means of communication of common interests through such experiences.

Conclusion

What happened to state enterprise property in Taimyr and nearby regions in the 1990s is a challenge to neoclassical models of property and production. I have tried to show how kinship and ancestral influence were the mechanisms by which entitlements and values within the community economy were perpetuated in Taimyr. Using traditional entitlements, local people produce and distribute the most vital and basic necessities among themselves and thus achieve quality of life and community viability.

The flow of resources and allocation of labour are managed through a range of familial and local solutions. For example, food is shared mainly among households related by close kinship links but also with friends and others who are in need. Food is given when there is a need and the household in question has some to give. This represents an entitlement to community resources. Although many hunters in Ust'-Avam have maintained more or less exclusive rights to assigned hunting territories in the promkhoz, and this is where much local procurement still occurs, a lot of what is produced now is kept for private (*svoi*) use and shared out in the community, thus entering the informal common property system.

More recently, the promkhoz has begun accepting meat and fish from hunters on a contract basis, whether they have been assigned a hunting territory, participate in the fall on-water slaughter, or hunt in the expanded amateur hunting area. The meat and fish turned in ostensibly entitle the hunter to payment, as well as to supplies in the cases of those employed by the promkhoz. Though it depends on the family, much of the cash earned through such contracts is shared among relatives and friends, especially for large purchases such as a firearm.

Family/clan and communal holdings were property forms allocated to sets of individuals professing kinship and co-residence. The implications of

such allocations were that hunters and their families would be more independent but that they would have to make their own arrangements for realising their products and finding alternative sources of fuel and equipment. From the regional government's perspective, hunting grounds were allocated to private holdings—the neoclassical economic implications being more efficient production and greater responsibility for resources. From the perspective of the members of the holdings, most holdings operated because labour was unpaid in cash and resources were shared, as they are in a domestic economy such as a family or extended-family farm. Relatively few people have followed this strategy in the villages, and in the 1990s, land claims represented greater socio-economic differentiation along geographic lines, since most of the owners lived in Taimyr's cities.

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Chapter 13

Social Security in Kamchatka Rural and Urban Comparisons

Alexander D. King

Soviet collectivisation in northern Kamchatka caused great suffering among the indigenous population, as among all peoples of the Soviet Union. Oral histories of collectivisation and the period during the Second World War consistently emphasise privation and hard work. This situation began to change in the late 1950s as the centre invested capital and professionals in the region on a massive scale as part of a larger project of industrialising the North. This investment was most intensive in the 1960s and 1970s and paralleled a migration of professionals and skilled workers from European parts of the Soviet Union into Kamchatka and the rest of the Soviet Far North and East. Upon graduation, many young professionals (doctors, engineers, lawyers, veterinarians, teachers, librarians) were sent to Kamchatka for their work assignment.[1] The result for indigenous Kamchatkans was both an unprecedented rise in their material standard of living and a demographic flood of European immigrants that reduced indigenous people to small minorities in areas they had long dominated socially and culturally, if not politically. Well into the twentieth century, travellers, scientists, and officials reporting on their journeys in north-east Asia consistently complained of the tendency of Russian or Cossack settlers to take up the economic and material lifeways of local indigenes (Hancock 2001: 101–37). The Soviets had successfully reversed this assimilative tendency by the 1970s. Thus, the phrase 'the great transformation' among indigenous Siberian communities may refer better to the demographic, social, and cultural changes of the 1960s and 1970s than to the political and economic reorganisation of the 1920s and 1930s (cf. Kerttula 2000: 15).

The post-Soviet changes in Kamchatka have been an unmitigated disaster for people without professional skills or other social capital that can be

[1] After Stalin's death and the curtailment of the gulag archipelago, Soviet authorities instituted a system of triple pay, double vacations, and other perquisites for people working in regions classified as the Far North (Slipchenko and Elkin 1979: 40–41).

leveraged into economic power (e.g., access to the fishing or mining industries or powerful positions in local administrative apparatuses). In general, indigenous Kamchatkans have suffered the most, but the current haves and have-nots are not divided strictly along ethnic or racial lines. Born Itelmen and raised in a small village, Valentina Bronevich, governor of the Koryak Autonomous Okrug from 1996 to 2000, and her brothers have become wealthy through their fishing company, Iyan Khut. Other individual Kamchatkans have been able to transform former political connections or managerial positions into successful enterprises or good jobs. On the other hand, many European 'newcomers' (*priezzhie*) are now destitute, after enjoying the highest wages and greatest benefits found anywhere in the Soviet Union. There is, however, a generalisable pattern of native Kamchatkans getting the short end of the stick. Newcomers tend to be in the best position in terms of social security. A third category exists—non-indigenous settlers who have lived for generations in Kamchatka—but these people live mostly in southern Kamchatka. This group is sometimes called Kamchadal, and their socio-economic lot is similar to that of indigenous Kamchatkans. Nelson Hancock (2001) describes one community of Kamchadals in central Kamchatka, their social position, and their economic strategies.

In this chapter I focus on the socio-economic insecurities of indigenous Kamchatkans living in the Koryak Autonomous Okrug (see map), although the patterns found in rural and urban spaces there are not limited to these ethnicities.[2] Indigenous Kamchatkans do not constitute a monolithic group or even a set of groups. People identified as such, however, have a set of symbolic assets and liabilities (e.g., fishing quotas, racism) that non-indigenous people do not have, for better or for worse.[3] I use the term 'social security' in a broad sense to refer to a set of state structures, informal arrangements, and expectations relating to social welfare. Rural and urban are not two distinct kinds of spaces but two ends of a continuum, with small, isolated villages in the tundra on one end and the Kamchatka Oblast capital city and port of Petropavlovsk-Kamchatski on the other. I describe a rural

[2] An *okrug* (region, district) is a class of administrative territory associated with ethnic minorities in the Russian Federation, first formed in 1930 as part of Soviet policies of ethnic self-determination. Until 1991, okrugs were officially subordinated to encompassing oblasts (provinces), but now they are classed as equal subjects of the Russian Federation. A *raion* is an administrative subunit of an okrug or oblast.

[3] Indigenous Kamchatkans living in the KAO are officially labelled as ethnic groups with the names Itelmen, Even, Chukchi, and Koryak. Koryaks are often divided into Nymylans (settled hunter-fishers) and Chavchuvens (reindeer herders). Nymylans living in northeastern KAO are also often labelled with the ethnonym Alutor. Although these names do not correspond to social groups, they can refer to differences in cultural styles and subsistence traditions.

pattern of isolation from markets, cash, and accountability but better proximity to subsistence opportunities. Urban spaces, meanwhile, provide people with better chances for education, health care, and goods and services at affordable prices, but they present greater administrative restrictions and infrastructure obstacles that prevent access to subsistence resources easily obtainable by villagers. In the conclusion, I connect these patterns to global trends in subsistence insecurity identified by June Nash (1994). I begin with a short overview of Soviet collectivisation and industrialisation of indigenous economic life in Kamchatka.

Industrializing Foragers

Under the tsar, the state was a powerful presence in Kamchatka, but not in everyday life. Native Kamchatkans were required to pay an annual tax in furs (*yasak*), and many were attacked and killed when they refused or were unable to pay. Able-bodied men were also liable for forced service to the state, usually in the form of providing transport for officials or for mail and

other cargo. In the early Soviet years, ethnographers and politicians engaged in a policy debate over the need to protect indigenous Siberians from such exploitation (mostly by Russians, but in Kamchatka also by Americans, Japanese, and Koreans) versus the need to push them into modern socialism as quickly as possible. Both sides argued that indigenous Siberians were the Soviet Union's key to harnessing the untapped wealth of vast regions in which they had lived in for centuries (Slezkine 1994).

The modernisers won out, and by the early 1930s, collectivisation of indigenous economic activities was proceeding apace with collectivisation around the Soviet Union. Stammler and Ventsel's account of collectivisation in Yamal and north-western Sakha (this volume: 350–56) is similar to that for Kamchatka, except that in Kamchatka native people played an increasingly subordinate role in administration after the Second World War. In Russia, collectivisation usually meant turning small peasant farmers into members of a collective enterprise and introducing mechanised technologies for large-scale, industrial agriculture (see Gray, this volume; Miller and Heady, this volume: 264; cf. Cellarius, this volume: 200). Hunter-fishers and reindeer herders in Kamchatka experienced the initial stages of collectivisation as a massive intrusion of the state into their everyday lives. *Kolkhozy* (worker-owned collective farms) were established for commercial fishing and the development of local agriculture among settled Nymylan communities, and *sovkhozy* (state-owned enterprises) were set up to collectivise reindeer herding.

The Soviet liberation of indigenous Siberians included policies of repression on a scale dwarfing experiences under the tsar. One example was related to me one day in October 2001. While we were drinking tea with a Nymylan-Koryak acquaintance in Lesnaya (a native village 100 kilometres north of Palana), my wife mentioned having read that the current governor of Kamchatka Oblast was defending Stalin's name, insisting that fewer people had died than has been claimed. Our hostess quietly replied,

> My father walked from Petropavlovsk to Lesnaya. They were at the fishing camp, and some of them [soldiers] came from Palana. They rounded up all the men, all the men. Only women and children were left. They were locked up in two houses like criminals for a day or two, then sent to Petropavlovsk. Many were shot. They buried people in a big hole in the ground at night, secretly. Many were shot, and some were let go, but they were told to walk home. There were women with them, old people. Some of them couldn't make it. They stood there and told them just to leave them behind, but they refused and carried them on their backs. Look at a map of Kamchatka, where

> Petropavlovsk-Kamchatski and Lesnaya are located. They had to walk on foot.

This distance must have been at least 900 kilometres (see map), most of it along subarctic forest and tundra paths in rugged country. I heard such stories from people in Kamchatka only after they had come to know me, and few told me such dramatic stories, but this one was not unique. More typical were comments such as 'Stalin killed them all' in response to my early (naive) queries about shamans.

A less violent and more enduring aspect of sovietisation in the 1920s and 1930s was the introduction of schools and culture bases (*kul'tbazy*) or red tents (*krasnie yarangi*) where people were taught literacy, Western hygiene, and Soviet political propaganda. Teachers started out using Koryak or Nymylan languages in the classroom, but by the 1940s, native languages were no longer used for official purposes or school instruction. As early as the 1930s, government policy was one of modernisation for all peoples of the new USSR. For indigenous Siberians, this was characterised as a socio-cultural leap of 1,000 years forward in evolutionary development, straight from primitive ways of life to modern communism, skipping intermediate stages such as capitalism (Slezkine 1994: 220; cf. Antropova 1971: 108ff.; Grant 1995). Thus, hunting and gathering had to become industrialised and organised in socialist collectives.

Oral histories of collectivisation among reindeer herding people always include stories about one or two rich reindeer herders who were arrested and taken away for owning several hundred or even several thousand deer. Such rich herders employed poor men and their households to tend their herds. In exchange, the herders were clothed, fed, and, for good service, even given young calves. Thus, a household with only a few deer ate the deer of the rich man and let their own small herd increase in size. Soviet ethnographers insisted on labelling this system 'undeveloped serfdom', despite their own data that hired herders were highly mobile (77% of one sample in 1932 had worked for the same herder for four years or less) and that abusive employers had trouble attracting and keeping hired hands (Bilibin 1933).

Among hunting and fishing Nymylans, material differentiation was more difficult to quantify than it was among reindeer herders. A household might have owned a boat, giving it an advantage over poorer people who did not control a boat directly, but even this kind of ownership was more complex than the Soviet collectivisers realised. A Nymylan woman living in Manily on the northern coast of the Okhotsk Sea told me a story of a boat owner who refused to brave rough, icy waters to save a child who had been

stranded on a rock by the rising tide.[4] Desperate pleading by the child's mother was of no avail, and the child drowned. The father was away, but when he returned and learned of the tragedy, he went to the sealskin boat and cut out the skin he had given the boat owner previously, taking back what originally belonged to him and also ruining the valuable boat. Thus, even something apparently as simple as boat ownership included multiple rights and obligations.

Collectivisation was part of a drive to industrialise fishing and hunting, which had not been developed by Russians previously. When the Soviets took control of the peninsula, Japanese salmon fishing companies had been operating in Kamchatka for over 25 years, to the enduring chagrin of officials and other Russian observers (Bergman 1927; Sil'nitskii 1902). Japanese fishing bases with processing centres punctuated river mouths up and down both the Okhotsk and Pacific coasts of Kamchatka (Jochelson 1928: 16). As the Soviets expelled these and other foreign enterprises, they developed their own commercial fishing operations in Kamchatka. Salmon, pollack, herring, and other valuable fish were caught by trawlers in the Okhotsk Sea and the north Pacific. Nymylans were employed in the 1930s and 1940s on medium-sized boats working the north Okhotsk out of bases like that at the now-closed village of Khaimchiki (near Paren; see map) and in crude processing centres in small villages. For the most part, however, Russians and other outsiders were brought in for industrialised trawler fishing, especially after 1960, when mechanised processing and canning were introduced on a large scale.

Soviet industrialisation of hunting followed a similar pattern. Sea otters had already been nearly hunted out before the Soviet revolution, and Kamchatka was not significant for other fur-bearing animals such as mink and fox, although these could (and still can) be found in some parts of the peninsula. By the 1970s, the professional hunting enterprise Gospromkhoz was dominated by newcomer management, and even most of the hunters were Russians and Ukrainians. This situation contrasts with the one in northwestern Sakha, where mostly local and native people controlled sovkhoz and village administration (Stammler and Ventsel, this volume: 332). Some Nymylans hunted as employees of Gospromkhoz or some other state-run enterprise, but their practices were regulated by Russian-Soviet visions of 'rational development'. Whether fur trapping or hunting sea mammals or bears, individuals and brigades had to fulfil an annual plan and account for

[4] The Sea of Okhotsk has some of the largest tides in the world, and in flat or shallow areas, one can be surprised and trapped by the incoming tide if one wanders too far out on the beach to collect shellfish.

their time, just like other employees of farms or factories (cf. Ziker, this volume: 365-6).

Hunting was part of being primitive, and the Soviet effort to modernise indigenous Siberians was structured by developing agriculture in the subarctic and Arctic regions. Thus, in Nymylan villages such as Lesnaya and Paren, collective farms were established through the importation of dairy cows, pigs, and chickens. By the late 1960s and early 1970s, barn complexes were heated in the winter by coal furnaces fuelled by low-grade coal deposits (mined locally or on Sakhalin Island), and villages were supplied with electricity from diesel-powered generators. By the 1970s and 1980s, most Nymylan men were employed as workers in industrialised agriculture (cf. Hancock 2004: 21–24). Soviet subsidies provided these enterprises with fuel, animal feed, and large amounts of cash. People all over Kamchatka described how the supposed stagnation of the pre-perestroika years was experienced locally as wealth and relative physical comfort—people were awash in dairy products, eggs, vegetables, and meat. This recollection echoes the nostalgia for the Brezhnev years that Miller and Heady (this volume: 264) have found in rural central Russia.

The industrialisation of Kamchatka did not resemble that of the German Ruhrgebiet or the Great Lakes area of North America, but the social relations were similar. In industrialised agriculture, the tillers of the soil are employees of large concerns managed by university- or institute-educated specialists. They use machinery at every opportunity, in highly capitalised production. Whereas Kamchatkan people had once fished and hunted primarily for subsistence and secondarily for exchange in a market for cash or goods, the Soviets reorganised production and consumption in an industrial manner. People went to work, put in their shift, got paid, and bought their food and other goods in a store. This was modernity.

Gender relations were reorganised through a commodification of reproduction as well as production. Soviet modernisation championed the liberation of women, which meant greater state intervention in reproduction through hospital births, kindergartens, and boarding schools, as well as wage opportunities (in effect, requirements) for women. As the state took reproductive responsibilities away from households, women's wage labour was often a commodification of reproductive work. Women occupying the paid position of *chum rabotnitsa* (tipi worker) were responsible for supporting the productive work of male reindeer herders by cooking, sewing, and preparing skins (see also Stammler and Ventsel, this volume: 329). A curious sexism was implicit in the different career tracks available to men and women. Men were employed mainly in productive outdoor activities, and native men in particular filled various unskilled and semi-skilled positions. Before sovieti-

sation, women in Kamchatka processed skins and sewed clothing for the children and men in their household (or for men they would have liked to have in their household [Rethmann 2001: 133ff.]). Industrialisation of this activity meant that women worked in sewing or souvenir factories, producing clothing or commodities for the local state enterprise. They still sewed (and continue to sew) for their families, but this was relegated to a domestic sphere separate from the industrial sphere. Thus, women worked in reindeer herding camps as tipi workers, cooking, sewing, and performing other tasks needed by the employee-herders. What had been (and continued to be on an informal level) kinship relations were transformed into industrial social relations between fellow employees who were, at least officially, loyal to the state enterprise first and to each other second.

Women's wage labour in town was reproductive, supporting men's productive work: they were teachers, medical personnel, low-level clerks in village or sovkhoz administration, bakers, shopkeepers. Thus, Nymylan women were much more likely than men to receive a higher education, which was required for jobs as teachers, nurses, and secretaries. Now that Kamchatka has a post-Soviet, post-industrial economy, in which most of the jobs in villages are in the government service sector, women are usually the ones with the educational cultural capital qualifying them to work in bureaucratic posts. As state collectives have made drastic reductions in their workforces or gone bankrupt, men have been left unemployed. Thus, women working in schools or village administrations and elders collecting government pensions are the most common suppliers of cash to native households at the turn of the twenty-first century.

Employment is a significant part of a person's self-respect in modern societies, and the conspicuous lack of gainful employment among native men is connected to contemporary problems in gender relations, including spousal abuse, alcoholism, and high rates of male mortality due to suicide and violent death.[5] The ethnographic record and oral histories provide few details on Koryak gender relations and ideologies before the Soviet Union. It does seem clear, however, that men and women performed economically complementary roles and shared decision-making power. In post-Soviet Kamchatka, a sexist ideology of male superiority in economic and political spheres, commonly found in developed countries, is belied by the social uselessness of an unemployed man. This contradiction is another source of

[5] See Pika 1999 and Ziker 2002 for discussions of alcohol and violent death in indigenous northern communities. Many locals and some analysts connect the contemporary social malaise to the experience of a generation raised in boarding schools, cut off from families and traditions, but boarding schools have also produced many people who went on to higher education and became leaders in their communities.

psychological and social strain on individuals already under tremendous pressure (cf. Vitebsky 2002).

By the end of the Second World War, the state had achieved nearly total control over most people's lives in Kamchatka—certainly those of the settled hunters and fishers. A few reindeer herding households continued to migrate in the territories of northern Koryakia, but by the end of the 1960s all of their children were going to schools, and their lives, too, were integrated into the Soviet plan for modernising the North. Industrialisation and professionalisation of hunting and fishing led to severe restrictions on those who were not officially employed in those activities, which included the majority of Nymylans. In the 1950s and 1960s, what native people did with their time outside of work hours regulated by the state was of little concern, and people continued to hunt game and fish salmon. In the 1970s, however, the regulation of wild resources became more tightly controlled in Kamchatka, and fishing quotas were enforced more rigorously for the indigenous population. Individuals and households were allocated a certain number of kilograms of each species of salmon they were allowed to fish.

The first and most dramatic result of these restrictions was the decimation of the dog population. Because people could not fish to feed their dogs, they killed most of them, and many dogs starved as other owners tried to feed them reduced rations. Nymylans keep dogs for many reasons, not the least of which is transportation. In the 1970s and 1980s this was not as important as in earlier times, because the Soviet system provided cheap and more or less regular air transport between villages, and many people were able to buy snowmobiles. The post-Soviet crisis has seen fuel costs skyrocket, and snowmobiles and spare parts have become scarce and expensive. Thus, Nymylans have a greater need for dog teams again. Some villages, such as Manily, have seen dog teams completely disappear, but in most small villages, at least a few households maintain a dog team. Feeding these dogs continues to be an endemic problem, because access to salmon is controlled by a capricious state represented by untrustworthy officials in local villages. In more than one village, the local fisheries inspector is also the most notorious caviar poacher.

Post-Soviet = Post-Industrial

Soviet and Koryak were not mutually exclusive categories of people or social actors. Many Koryaks and other indigenous Siberians were members of the Communist Party, and by the 1980s, all of them (like most other citizens of the USSR) thought of themselves as Soviets. Industrialisation of the Soviet North carried many benefits for indigenous Kamchatkans. The Soviet system provided the highest standard of living that indigenous people

in Kamchatka have ever known. Although many native villages were closed and people were forced to relocate to new places against their will, the villages that remained were equipped with electricity, running water, centralised heating, schools, hospitals, and regular air transport.[6] Every village had a doctor, and in emergencies patients were flown to a town or city with the appropriate facilities. Soviet schools were instrumental in shifting populations from speaking indigenous languages to speaking Russian, but they also produced literacy rates near 100%. I found fur trappers and reindeer herders with only a secondary education under the Soviets to be better educated than many of my college students educated in California public schools.[7] On the other hand, most of the best apartments in the new buildings were reserved for skilled workers imported from European parts of the Soviet Union. Despite such discrimination against native Kamchatkans, most adults reminiscing about the 1970s and 1980s describe the Soviet Union as halcyon, especially in comparison with the current difficulties. This theme came up during a conversation I had about religious practices and beliefs with a group of native people born in the late 1950s:

> Twenty years ago [the late 1970s], elders presaged the current crisis. They said the Russians were spoiling us with all kinds of good things. 'Everything is sweet and easy, and then everything will fall apart. Nothing will be left. Children will walk the streets drunk. You will lose deer by the hundreds and thousands', they cautioned. Now that has all come true. This was presaged by the elders twenty years ago when they saw the first signs of people leaving traditional life for Soviet living. They said people would fight among themselves. There would be constant war.

Similar comments were made to me in other villages as well.

Though there certainly is not war in Kamchatka as there is in Central Asia or the Caucasus, all present at the conversation agreed that current strife between neighbours—thieving and vandalism—was like a state of war. The ethnographic record (e.g., Jochelson 1908) indicates that war in Kamchatka

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[6] The Okhotsk coastal village of Paren is an exception to this pattern, as okrug authorities have been trying to close the village since at least 1980. Paren's school goes only through the third grade, and the village has always had irregular supplies of health care, groceries, electricity, and transport (Pika 1992).

[7] Statistics and formal research may not bear out my initial impression, but I was struck by the knowledge and curiosity about literature, biology, and world affairs that ordinary people in Kamchatka displayed in casual conversation. I have been equally struck by the ignorance and lack of interest rampant among American college students, as are many of my peers, also recent Ph.D.s.

was like the kind of small-scale feuding and raiding common among many foraging societies. Such a state is not one of total violent conflict or destruction, but it is characterised by a lack of trust and the need for constant vigilance over material possessions and persons, which are vulnerable to sneaky assaults. A universal experience in Kamchatka is the feeling that the 1990s were a time when the thieves were let loose upon a defenceless population. The cognate of 'privatise' in Russian (*privatizirovat'*) is used synonymously with 'take' or 'steal'. In a small village such as Srednie Pakhachi, moveable valuables (boat motors, chainsaws, other tools) may be stolen and quickly moved downriver to the town of Ust-Pakhachi and sold or traded for alcohol. In the 1990s, people in small villages resorted to installing several large locks on doors that formerly had none. A common lament described how dramatic this change was for middle-aged people, who had been young adults in the 1960s and 1970s: 'Before, if you weren't home, you just leaned a stick up against the front door, and that meant you weren't home. No one would bother your house or anything. Now we have to lock up our house, our utility sheds, and still they are opened with a universal key [crowbar]'.

Although John Ziker (personal communication, 2002) frequently heard the same lament in Taimyr, this sense of physical insecurity should not be overdrawn. Violent death is most commonly associated with alcohol and accidents. Sober, cold-blooded murder is probably less common now than it was before the *pax sovieticus,* and certainly much less common than in any U.S. town.

More importantly, people in such villages seem to be able to negotiate access to territory and subsistence resources with little or no recourse to violence. I have not witnessed or even heard of serious quarrels or violent altercations over access to subsistence resources, which potentially could be life-or-death matters. Indeed, the opposite is more common. For example, in Manily on the Okhotsk coast, Nymylans long familiar with fishing on the coast expressed only amusement to me concerning the recent arrival of reindeer-herding Chavchuven Koryaks who were setting up fishing camps in summer. While maritime Nymylans may laugh at inland Chavchuvens struggling with nets, tides, and an unfamiliar environment, they also assist elders and even appreciate the company at a once-lonely fishing camp. Ziker (this volume: 375-82) also found rural native people quietly respecting informal usufruct claims and accommodating one another's needs.

Soviet industrialisation included modernisation at gunpoint and was marked by a transformation of social organisation and a substantial capitalisation of production. Thus, Kamchatkan hunters and gatherers represent a much different case from the Hadzabe in Africa, who resist state intervention (Kaare 1993), or the wage-gathering Nayaka, who take advantage of modern

opportunities with no appreciable change in their culture or society (Bird-David 1983, 1992). These social transformations may have been represented by Soviet scholars in more positive and dramatic terms than they were experienced locally, but indigenous Kamchatkans considered themselves participants in Soviet modernity. Soviet ideologies of change, modernity, and overcoming primitivism contributed to the ethnographic separation of Siberian peoples from hunting and gathering studies (Schweitzer 2000). Multiple economic strategies and incorporation into the state system made indigenous Siberians appear too different from ethnographers' imagined 'real' foragers to warrant comparison with African hunters. Anthropologists now recognise that a proper ethnographic understanding of hunters and gatherers must incorporate their multiple economic strategies, including trade, wage labour, and even some herding and gardening (Bird-David 1992; Hitchcock and Biesele 2000; Layton 2001; Yoshida 2001).

The foregoing description of relative material comfort and high social security among indigenous Kamchatkans needs qualification. Health care and housing among native Kamchatkans in the 1970s and 1980s were better than the health care and housing their parents had experienced in the 1950s and earlier, but they were not good or even adequate by Western standards. University quotas for native people were just as likely to hinder smart students as to aid unqualified ones. The doctors and hospitals available to most native people, who lived in small, remote villages, were of the lowest quality in the Soviet Union. Native housing, too, was of the poorest quality. For example, the residents of Anapka (about 100 miles north of present-day Tymlat) had to pack up their lives and leave in one day without warning in 1974. Many families were moved to a hurriedly erected apartment building in Ossora that lacked any plumbing and still lacks it to this day. When Ukrainians and Russians arrived in the same town, they immediately received nice apartments in new, solidly constructed buildings.[8]

State investment and subsidies ceased with the fall of the Soviet Union, and the post-Soviet transformation includes a move towards a post-industrial economy in which most jobs are in the service sector and households are largely sustained by subsistence activities. Many in Kamchatka have been experiencing the post-Soviet transformation as a time of social and economic change nearly as radical and traumatic as the Soviet transformation was for their grandparents. People are forced to draw upon a variety of traditional strategies for fishing, hunting, and gathering (mostly berries), irrespective of any desire for 'cultural revival'. These days, people are foraging because they are hungry. For some Nymylans in smaller villages,

[8] For a detailed account of social and economic problems common among native Siberians during perestroika and in early post-Soviet times, see Pika 1999.

this represents a continuity with Soviet times, except that now one is engaging in these activities privately or in loose coordination with kin and friends, and not through state enterprises in exchange for wages (see also Ziker, this volume: 386). For indigenous elites like those in the okrug capital of Palana (population 4,500), the experience is one of an abrupt fall into poverty. Well-paid, white-collar jobs have been exchanged for whatever employment is available and for spending time at the river netting salmon. Educated professionals express anger and frustration in simple statements such as, 'Earlier we bought fish in the store!' People who are able to connect activities necessary for survival to a solid sense of self-respect are in a better situation than those who see fishing and hunting as a coping strategy for poverty, whether through loss of deer or loss of a good job.

One indigenous activist embraces such activities as part of her ethnic identity: 'We natives have a way of life spiritually connected with being out in the tundra, at the fishing camp, and this process is just as important to our lives as full stomachs'. Yekaterina (a pseudonym) is a journalist and active in politics, working with other native leaders locally and regionally. She is one of the few people to articulate a direct connection between fishing and personal or social identity. The director of a local fishing enterprise had said that his company could do all the fishing and salt fish for village Koryaks, so they needn't worry about working at the summer fishing camps (and the administration needn't bother to allocate them fishing quotas). Local native leaders firmly opposed this idea. Yekaterina and others insisted that the way of life at the fishing camp was just as important as the fish and food itself.[9] A few other educated Koryaks are also implementing ideas of 'neo-traditionalism' put forward in a 1994 book by Aleksandr Pika and others (published in English as Pika 1999).

Fishing among Nymylans and Itelmens in Kamchatka is dominated by intensive harvesting and drying of various salmon species, which run for specific periods during the summer and fall. Many native people have taken up smoking or salting salmon, something learned from Russian newcomers, but for many native families the staple food stored for winter continues to be dried salmon. After salmon, potatoes grown in small garden plots and store-bought foods predominate in most native people's diets. I have collected no quantitative data on the subject, but seal products are also important both nutritionally and, as comfort food, symbolically. The meat is difficult to store for long periods and is usually consumed within a week or two of hunting. Rendered seal fat is stored in jars and consumed as a condiment with dried salmon or (among the poorest) used as lamp oil.

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[9] Kerttula (2000: 136ff.) makes the same point with respect to whaling among Siberian Yup'ik in Chukotka.

All villages in Kamchatka have been electrified, although some of the remotest villages have irregular electricity due to the lack of diesel fuel for the generators. Fuel prices have risen to global levels in the post-Soviet era, and although electricity prices are regulated by the government, they have become very high for people who typically have a household cash income of less than US$100 per month. Families often confront the problem of having their electricity turned off for non-payment, which is especially hard in the dark, winter months. Individuals risk physical injury and fines or jail by tampering with outdoor wiring and setting up what is called 'left electricity'. Such subterfuges are easier to accomplish in rural villages than in urban spaces, where wiring is more closely controlled.

Doctors assigned to small villages in Kamchatka after medical school are now leaving as soon as they can. Small villages such as Srednie Pakhachi and Lesnaya have not had a doctor for years. They rely on nurses and nurse practitioners to care for the sick in inadequate village hospitals and hope that a helicopter can evacuate seriously ill people to better facilities. Often people die before help arrives, or they arrive at the hospital too late for adequate treatment. The selection of clothing, food, and other goods for sale in these small villages is of the lowest quality and goes for prices two to four times greater than those in the Kamchatka Oblast centre of Petropavlovsk-Kamchatski. While death by starvation is rare, malnutrition is killing the entire indigenous population slowly, retarding child development and fuelling a rampage of tuberculosis reminiscent of the epidemics that decimated native Siberian communities before the introduction of antibiotics and sulfa drugs.

The post-Soviet banking system is best described as primitive. Under the Soviets, indigenous Kamchatkans, like most other Soviet citizens, had more money than they knew what to do with. Like most other Soviets, they saw the equivalent of tens of thousands of dollars in savings melt into air during the rampant inflation of the early 1990s. Nowadays, few ordinary people in small Kamchatkan villages have bank accounts, because the banks are far removed in space and the money is safer in a mattress or immediately spent. People buy bread, groceries, and other goods from local stores and traders on credit extended by merchants, and on payday a few sober women make their rounds with wads of cash, paying off debts, as the rest of the adult population stumbles about drunkenly for two or three days.

Wages, pensions, and other payments are made in cash from a sack of money flown in from Moscow. This money arrives in Palana, is counted and registered, and then is distributed to *raion* (county, district) administrations, where it is again counted and registered before final distribution. Although Moscow has been reliable in sending money from the federal budget, the

Koryak Autonomous Okrug is notorious for having significant backlogs in wage payments.[10] At least one cause of these backlogs is that when a sack of money arrives, raion officials use it to make a fixed-rate, short-term loan (e.g., 20% for six months) to a local entrepreneur. When the entrepreneur repays the loan, the officials keep the interest and send the principal to the villages to pay the back wages. When the debtor has trouble paying the entire amount, the officials send the villages only partial payments for back wages, under the strange euphemism of 'advances'.

In the okrug and raion administrative centres (e.g., Palana, Tilichiki, Ossora), wages are paid more regularly, especially since President Vladimir Putin instituted tighter controls on the disbursement of federal monies after 2000. Cash income is generally more available in the city of Petropavlovsk-Kamchatski and nearby towns. In addition to service jobs, which are also found in small villages, Petropavlovsk has many commercial opportunities. Most of these are not entirely legal, and any private enterprise is subject to harassment and coercion from both authorities and gangsters. Russian commercial laws require various registration fees and business taxes that make small enterprises impossible. Low-level authorities can extort bribes by threatening to enforce the letter of the law, which would be ruinous. Organised criminals operate protection rackets (pay or we blow up your store and break your kneecaps) that target successful enterprises. While similar things may occur in small towns and even villages, the stakes are greater in urban spaces where money is more visible to a wider group of gangsters and state officials.

Economy and Identity

The symbolic value of salmon varies greatly between Nymylans ('town dwellers') and Chavchuvens ('those rich in deer'). Fishing and processing salmon are intricately bound up with Nymylan ideas of tradition, cultural identity, and self-respect, as the earlier remark by Yekaterina suggests. An industrious household is one that produces a surplus of dried salmon. More than enough is stored for winter in order to cover contingencies of bad weather or financial hardship in spring, as well as for being giving away to friends and others in need. The salmon harvest is hard work, but people described it to me, and I participated in it, as an enjoyable time. Although

[10] Samples from the Russian press are summarised in English by the Radio Free Europe–Radio Liberty listservs. The KAO is listed as among the worst at least once per year in news stories about backlogs of unpaid wages. See RFE/RL Newsline, vol. 3, no. 102, part 1, 26 May 1999; RFE/RL Russian Federation Report, vol. 1, no. 14, 2 June 1999; Newsline 13 March 2000; RFE/RL Newsline, vol. 6, no. 141, part 1, 30 July 2002. All are archived at http: //www.rferl.org/.

native people enjoy the comforts of a warm house with electricity, television, and running water, they also cherish time spent at the seacoast or along the river. As I often heard, 'There is no bad weather in the tundra', even during a tedious Kamchatka drizzle. Others have explained (to my quizzical countenance?) their obvious delight in the rough life in tents or cabins with a proud, 'I am a Nymylan!' Such statements are more likely to come from people living in small villages, usually those without higher education or a skilled profession. These people who can turn necessity into a virtue are also more optimistic about their children's future and avoid the self-destructive behaviour common in many impoverished communities.

Reindeer herders are considerably less enthusiastic about fishing. They see fish, especially dried salmon, as starvation food and a sign of the low level to which they have fallen. Domestic reindeer herds have all but disappeared in northeast Asia during the post-Soviet transformation, for various reasons. Not least among them is the belt-tightening of state enterprises as they cut back on jobs for herders and support for those still employed. Lack of veterinary care, stealing, and growing wolf populations are additional factors (deer stealing being the biggest, from what I have seen) in the precipitous decline in numbers of reindeer. Now that meat is less available and cash is scarce, reindeer herders are turning to salmon to feed their families and to salmon caviar as the only opportunity for cash income. These people do not use fish or fishing as part of any discourse about cultural identity or self-respect. If it is discussed at all, fishing is seen as a threat to their self-respect.[11]

One example of the implemention of 'neo-traditionalism' is Luiza. She had been a communist, but like many others, she felt betrayed by the events of the early 1990s and decided to change her life and take care of her mother and extended family. Her 'experiment', as she called it, was to exploit traditional resources for subsistence and earn cash to supplement her meagre pension by selling salmon caviar and sewing souvenirs and clothing. She returned to many traditional Koryak practices that she had left behind. 'Earlier, I followed the Russian ideas of cleanliness', she told me. 'We whitewashed the walls every year, even if they didn't need it, scrubbed the floor often, and kept everything spotless. Now I am not so careful. I haven't been to the *banya* in two weeks'. At that she laughed, 'Maybe I'm lazy', but she seemed to be one of the most industrious people at the fishing camp where she had constructed a small cabin. Not only did she take care of herself and her mother, but she also provided her sisters and their children

[11] I address the contemporary catastrophe of reindeer herding in Kamchatka in a forthcoming MPISA working paper.

with food she put up for the winter. 'Summer feeds winter', she told me several times.

In conversations, however, it was clear that Luiza did not link her economic activities to a sense of identity. Personal and social identities are more often rooted in a sense of place and in kinship networks. Her family was from the village of Anapka, which was closed in 1974. Sometimes the difference between 'Russians', or whites, and 'Koryaks', or natives, was important for Luiza and other Koryaks in Ossora, but more often, ties of common origin, kinship, or a common connection to Anapka were salient in understanding how she thought of herself and what she called 'my people' and 'our traditions'. When Soviet officials closed Anapka, they sent those employed as fishermen to Il'pyr, the reindeer herders to Tymlat, and the pensioners to the administrative centre of Ossora, not bothering to ask who was related to whom or where people wanted to go. Anapka remains a community not only in imagination but through individuals who maintain active relationships among these three villages. People travel and visit one another, and I found that the social space of Anapka continued to define an 'us' and 'our people' more than the physical space of Il'pyr, Tymlat, or Ossora. The village of Karaga is similar to Anapka in this respect. It was moved in 1954 to its present location close to the seashore. Nowadays, many Karagintsi live in Ossora, but their kin ties, fishing camps, and other social relations continue within a primary frame of Karaga people.

One area in which indigenous identity can serve as symbolic capital for social security is housing, which is in short supply everywhere. Previously, the best housing was reserved for newcomers as one of the important perquisites used to attract young people to take up jobs in the Far North. Apartments were all state property and were usually controlled by organisations that provided housing to employees, as was typical across the Soviet Union. Housing was the first capital to be privatised in Kamchatka in the early 1990s. Residents had to fill out many forms and negotiate a labyrinthine bureaucracy, but they came out with title to the apartment in which they were living.

Those with the greatest Soviet cultural capital (familiarity with the system and connections to key administrators) were the first to privatise their apartments. In the mid-1990s such people received huge sums of cash as they sold their new private property and moved 'back to the mainland' through special programmes aiding those who wanted to return home. These apartments were purchased by the KAO administration and a few well-funded federal agencies for their employees. The housing market in Palana (a town of 4,500 people) was the most expensive in all of Kamchatka as prices were driven up by people's ability to pay, much as in the skyrocketing

housing market in California's Silicon Valley during the technology boom of the late 1990s. This created a situation in which someone with a dismal apartment but hope of moving into one of the recently vacated apartments in the newest buildings had to lobby (connive with) his or her employer or another organisation to allocate millions of rubles (tens of thousands of dollars) to obtain a three-room apartment. Native identity could be an asset, if successfully deployed, because local native organisations (such as local sections of the Russian Association of Indigenous People of the North, or RAIPON) or government administrations were allocated monies earmarked for helping indigenous people of the North.

Yekaterina told me how she had fought for her apartment, and how Koryak identity was instrumental to her success. When she came back from studying in St. Petersburg, she had a horrible apartment without plumbing. She went to the raion administration head and requested an apartment. He said, 'Everyone needs an apartment'. She replied, 'As a native I have special rights to an apartment'. His answer was, 'And who are we? We came to save you'. In the end, she was able to overcome racist obstacles and to use her status as a Koryak to obtain a decent place to live, unlike most other indigenous people in Kamchatka.

The symbolic capital in native ethnicity is latent and difficult to realise. It requires the additional social capital of some combination of higher education, political adroitness, and good social contacts. If my acquaintance had been a Russian recently arrived from St. Petersburg with a college degree, she would have automatically received a new, comfortable apartment. Koryak ethnicity has to be leveraged by shrewd and persistent action. Officials in the KAO section of RAIPON living in Palana have been able to use RAIPON monies intended to help native people obtain adequate housing for nice apartments for themselves and their cronies. Native people outside this small circle continue to live in the sovkhoz section of Palana—a neighbourhood across the river (the same symbolic border as railroad tracks in American towns) where an indigenous community has been relegated to substandard housing in crumbling buildings. In terms of everyday life, ethnic identity, whether as 'Koryak' or any other native ethnicity, is more a symbolic liability than a symbolic asset.

Native people are defined in terms of ethnographic descriptions from the period 1900 to 1930. The writers of these descriptions were careful to separate tradition from modernity and did their best to describe what then was assumed to be the authentically traditional aspects of Nymylan people's lives. Thus, real natives wore only fur clothes, lived in semisubterranean houses or skin tents, and spoke languages indigenous to Kamchatka, not Russian or English. Speaking in Russian or wearing store-bought clothes

was evidence of assimilation or being 'Russianised' (Jochelson 1908: 2, 15). Tradition is commonly opposed to modernity in Kamchatka. This presents a quandary, because people feel they have to choose between being native, a Nymylan or a Koryak, and being modern, someone with a college education and a profession. Nymylans and other indigenous Siberians were characterised as primitives, and it was their tradition that made them primitive. Today people see activities such as living in houses, watching television, flying to Moscow, and using rubber boots and motorboats at the fishing camp as Russian or modern practices, and they declare that there are no real natives in Kamchatka. Since natives are primitives, they cannot use modern things and still be natives. This 'technologist' understanding of culture and identity can also be found in official state policy in places as different as Africa and Canada (Layton 2001; Ridington 2001).

Most of the Nymylans I have met, for example, start with the proposition, 'I am a Nymylan [or Koryak]', and go from there. Being a 'real' Nymylan in these kinds of discourses is connected to ways of knowing, as David Anderson (2000) has found in Arctic central Siberia. This was how Luiza thought of her experiment with neo-traditionalism. Fishing, hunting, and other subsistence activities are central to this identity, but they are neither necessary nor sufficient conditions for being a real native. Indeed, this category of 'real native' does not have simple conditions that can be identified as necessary or sufficient in all contexts. It can, however, be characterised by recurrent patterns. Knowing the landscape, how to move about in it, and how to take opportunities as they present themselves are recurrent features of being native in Kamchatka.[12] For Nymylans this often includes the sea—knowing how to read it and how to move safely across the water in small boats (cf. Anderson 2000: 116ff.). Knowledge of places and people and time spent in a community are more often used as markers of authentic native identity by native people themselves than is economy or race.

Those who became modern Soviet persons by shedding traditions, as Bruce Grant (1995, 1999), Yuri Slezkine (1994), and others have shown, now feel betrayed by the failure of Soviet modernity. The postmodern condition may be exciting to some, but people in Kamchatka feel that the rug has been pulled out from underneath them. At others' behest, they turned their backs on tradition and embraced modernity. Now modernity has disappeared and their claims to an indigenous tradition are often denied, leaving them neither modern nor traditional. Some people have the knowledge of language and custom to obviate such challenges, but their use of tradition is seen by others as an about-face from their earlier embrace of modernity, especially

[12] For a detailed discussion of the connections between identity and landscape in Kamchatka, see King 2002.

when they happen to be former communists such as Luiza. The traditions they possess, indigenous knowledge passed on from now-deceased elders, are often de-legitimated as 'assimilated' or 'Russianised', not 'really Koryak' or 'native'. Challenges to being a real native are symbolically violent assaults upon a person's self-respect. They are usually made by newcomers from Moscow and other parts of Europe. Natives in the village are primitives, but they have lost their traditions, so they aren't real natives, but they can't be modern, either. The result is that they are subhuman and nothing more. The loss of an authentic native tradition is experienced as a discourse of dehumanisation.

Native people themselves on occasion talk about themselves and their problems in this manner. More often, these assaults are deflected by asserting an identification with tradition that is more dynamic, closer to Roy Wagner's (1981: 37 ff.) use of 'tradition' as a context or ground upon which people invent new figures. Self-respect is maintained by rejecting the simplistic Soviet antimony of tradition and modernity, in a manner parallel to a trend in anthropological thinking about tradition and modernity. Very few do this consciously, but I find the unconscious acceptance of tradition and modernity together by uneducated people a more sophisticated approach to cultural life than that typically expressed by educated people in Palana and other towns.

Towns and Cities: Cash Dependencies

Administrative centres in the Koryak Autonomous Okrug, such as Tilichiki and Ossora, but most notably the capital, Palana, provide more opportunities for cash income and better social services. As newcomer professionals abandon Kamchatka to return to 'the mainland', they leave the okrug short of trained specialists in all professions. Palana is one of the few places I have been where people complain that there are too few lawyers. Although many of these jobs, such as doctor or attorney, require years of specialised higher education, many other vacant posts are in the government administrative apparatus, and any higher education degree will suffice, especially if a person has some kind of experience in a managerial capacity (e.g., sovkhoz assistant director, school head, village bureaucrat). Thus, many women with degrees in education are filling the lower administrative hierarchies in raion and okrug administrations. Salaries in these positions are paid more or less regularly and provide enough income for a small family to meet most of its basic needs. Prices are lower in raion centres, and the goods (especially clothing) are likely to be in slightly better condition than they are in villages.

Native people are moving from the remote, desolate villages to these centres at the first opportunity. Tilichiki-Korf is one site of this migration,

and Palana is the second. Many Even people traditionally lived in northern Penzhinski Raion, especially in the villages of Oklan and Ayanka. These two villages can be reached only by motorboat (for a few weeks in summer) or helicopter. Thus, Palana has a growing community of Evens (and others) as people move from the most distant reaches of the okrug to the centre. This withdrawal from the land operates in stages (cf. Vitebsky 2002). As highly educated and skilled newcomers leave Palana, those native people with the most education and administrative skills are moving from the villages and taking their vacated jobs and apartments. As reindeer herd numbers have crashed and sovkhozy have gone bankrupt, most jobs in the villages have disappeared. Unemployed reindeer herders and other *tundroviki* are also withdrawing from the land and moving to the villages, often into recently vacated apartments or into the homes of relatives. This demographic shift is both a response to increasing subsistence insecurity and a cause of it. While getting by in a small village or out in the tundra may be difficult, subsistence practices (fishing, hunting, gathering) are difficult or nearly impossible to carry out from more urban areas.

While Palana is the administrative centre of the KAO, Ossora and Tilichiki-Korf (both on the Pacific coast) are closer to the commercial and transportation centres of the okrug. In any case, the socio-economic centre of Kamchatka is 'the city', Petropavlovsk-Kamchatski. Just as 'the city' is unambiguous in New York State and parts of New Jersey and Connecticut, so *gorod* (city) in Kamchatka always refers to Petropavlovsk (also known as 'Peter'). Petropavlovsk was founded in 1740 by Vitus Bering and served as an important link to Russian America. Until the mid-1920s, the city was part of a network of Pacific Rim trade. Since the fall of the Soviet Union, which had closed the city (along with all of Kamchatka and most of the Russian Far East) to the outside world—even Soviet citizens—Petropavlovsk has been reintegrated into Pacific trade networks. Fish have replaced furs as the principal product. Gold and offshore oil are potential resources, which have so far proven unrealistic to develop.[13] In any case, Petropavlovsk and nearby towns are the only parts of Kamchatka to have anything resembling a productive economy, as opposed to the okrug, which is at the mercy of federal budgets and whatever subsidies still exist.

The reintegration of Petropavlovsk into the world capitalist system created a great local demand for English skills, and English teachers have found working as English-language secretaries in private firms much more lucrative than teaching. Private instruction in English and other foreign

[13] World prices for gold and petroleum products would have to increase significantly to make the difficulties of extraction and transport surmountable. Also, there has been consistent local opposition on environmental grounds, with international green NGOs also active.

languages (especially Japanese) makes teaching viable as a career again, but it also helps widen the gap between haves and have-nots. Other kinds of private or fee-based education are growing in Petropavlovsk, as they are all over Russia.

Prices for goods are much lower in Petropavlovsk than in northern Kamchatka. City people are paid according to the same scale as those in the okrug, so the urban standard of living is much higher. The selection and quality of goods, health services, and educational opportunities are much greater in Petropavlovsk. The city has the only real port in Kamchatka, and the 1990s saw a flood of Japanese cars, Chinese clothes, American chicken, and other goods from around the Pacific in the shops and markets at prices that people with jobs could afford. Petropavlovsk has a pedagogical university and several institutes, and universities in other cities such as Novosibirsk, Moscow, and Petersburg are a direct flight away. A ticket from Petropavlovsk to Moscow costs about the same as one from Palana to Petropavlovsk. Though electricity and centralised heating have been unreliable in the past, a new geothermal plant (the first in Russia) is now supplying about a quarter of Kamchatka Oblast's electricity needs (at least the part that is on the grid), and recent fiscal restructuring in the energy sector has made delivery more reliable. In short, material life is better and more affordable in the urban centre than in rural regions, especially the okrug, and opportunities for education and employment are also much greater.

The disadvantage is that employment and cash income are more critical to basic survival in the city than in the village. One cannot walk or dogsled from a city apartment to a salmon stream, berry grounds, or hunting area. Even if one is able to obtain transportation (with friends or on a bus), getting the catch, kill, or gathering back home is fraught with two difficulties. The transportation problem is obvious; equally problematic is that subsistence hunting and fishing are legally considered to be poaching. Even if the poor person trying to feed his family usually avoids fines or imprisonment, he will certainly have fish and meat (as well as equipment) confiscated by inspectors, who often set up roadblocks at key points between resource areas and population centres. In a small village, one can tend a potato garden or vegetable greenhouse (usually a small structure covered in clear plastic) located near one's house or apartment, or at most a short walk from the village. In the city, such 'dacha areas' are a lengthy bus-ride away and much more vulnerable to pilfering. Thus, if one has no job or cash income in Petropavlovsk, life is much worse than it is in a small village. Malnourishment is certain and starvation a real threat, even more so than in the half-abandoned village of Paren on Penzhina Bay.

The pattern of rural and urban advantages and disadvantages runs along a continuum. Villages such as Paren and Ayanka in northwestern Koryakia are the most rural, distant from any centre. Small towns (2,500–3,000 people) such as Ossora and even Palana are intermediate. Small cities such as Milkovo and Yelizovo, connected to Petropavlovsk by a good road (Yelizovo is a 40-minute drive from the city), are certainly more urban-like, but not nearly as urban, for all its pros and cons, as the city, Petropavlovsk-Kamchatski. While rural people may be vulnerable to the whims of local fisheries inspectors, such abuse of power does not endanger subsistence as it does in urban areas. Villagers are much more likely to be able to catch enough salmon to feed their household over the winter than are city dwellers. One may want to think of this behaviour as part of local 'moral economy', following E. P. Thompson (1991). Poaching in these villages is tolerated, most likely because the inspectors know that it is for subsistence, whereas in southern Kamchatka, salmon poaching is most often driven by caviar production, and bear poaching, by the gallbladder trade with China. Village hunters know about these cash opportunities but do not have access to markets, as I learned when I was offered several gallbladders in Lesnaya.

Conclusion

In the Koryak Autonomous Okrug of northern Kamachatka, small villages such as Srednie Pakhachi, Paren, and Lesnaya are distant from commercial centres, have very few opportunities for cash income, and are usually cut off from basic social and health services. Unlike the opportunities presented by the oil industry in Yamal or by diamond mining in Sakha (Stammler and Ventsel, this volume), rural areas have no market for tundra produce. However, they are close to critical subsistence resources, notably salmon streams but also berrying grounds and areas where one can hunt terrestrial and sea mammals. Cities such as Petropavlovsk-Kamchatski, and even the small town of Palana, provide people with better chances for education, health care, and goods and services at affordable prices—but without a cash income, one is quickly homeless and starving. People in villages are more vulnerable to the corruption of local officials, but they are also more often able to manage subsistence activities with less interference from the state. In cities or other administrative centres, one can appeal to different levels of government for redress of wrongs, but fishing and hunting activities are more carefully controlled, and the system is stacked against indigenous people. Petropavlovsk-Kamchatski is one of the most expensive cities in Russia, but goods and foodstuffs of lower quality sell for two to three times Petropavlovsk's prices in remote northern Kamchatkan villages. Every village used to have at least one doctor, but now many native villages are

fortunate to have just a nurse practitioner. Tuberculosis rates have soared, and people are dying of this preventable and curable disease, a disease of poverty.

The demise of socialism in Russia has meant the elimination or crippling of nearly all state-supported social security measures. Areas such as Yamal, where indigenous people have had some success in adapting to a non-state market, are the exceptions to a pattern of increasing social insecurity. As Kamchatka has become reintegrated into the global economy as a peripheral area of natural resources (currently fish, potentially oil and gold), the scene looks remarkably like that in Latin America as described by June Nash (1994: 7): 'Like peasants and proletariats of decades past, the forest dwellers are becoming dependent on global enterprises for jobs, markets, or handouts. At the same time, the withdrawal of capital from old industrial areas leaves communities devastated in its wake, forced to resort to whatever subsistence strategies are still viable'.

In the case of Kamchatka, 'old industrial areas' refers to state reindeer herding or fishing enterprises. Just as Nash (1994: 22) 'found a range of subsistence activities persisting even while the people are increasingly integrated into the world system as wage workers or commodity producers', I found in Kamchatka that few households could get by without a combination of subsistence and commodity production. While specific problems and strategies for overcoming them vary from rural to urban contexts, social insecurity is experienced as intense and worrisome.

Readers may wonder whether I have been overdramatic in painting a picture of suffering and hardship in Kamchatka, but I worry that I have not painted it bleak enough. Life is harder in northern Kamchatka than it has been for several generations, but people there want to do more than just survive. They are trying, and often succeeding, to live with dignity, even beauty. I have found that impoverished Koryaks and Nymylans living in small villages in squalid surroundings are often terrified by the prospect of having me visit, ashamed of their material circumstances. Especially if they are educated and have travelled some of the world (and many have), they fear that I, an American, will see their poverty and judge them harshly, attack their dignity. After they see that I take off my shoes in their home, drink from their cups, and judge them from their conversation (I return to visit people who are interesting), they show me a rich cultural world of meanings and ideas, of which many newcomers (*priezzhie*) have not even an inkling. This cultural world is important not only to the symbolic anthropologist or the artistically inclined Koryak. It has increasing value on the world market, where people are willing to pay hundreds or even thousands of dollars for authentic souvenirs, and even more just to talk with a real

Siberian shaman. Valorising traditional knowledge, whether it be shamanism, craft production, or traditional ecological knowledge, requires a potentially perilous engagement with the world capitalist system. Nevertheless, many indigenous Kamchatkans rightly see such an engagement as a potential solution to current economic disempowerment.

I argued earlier that the symbolic capital of a Koryak (or other indigenous) identity is difficult to leverage into economic capital and is more often a liability in daily life. This may change as individual Koryaks and Kamchatkan indigenous organisations increase their political acumen and improve their contacts in the Fourth World (or First Nation) global network. These connections are helping an increasing number of individuals and small groups parlay rich cultural assets into foreign travel and hard currency through ethnic dance festivals, souvenir sales, and appeals to various organisations for assistance in cultural revival. The concept of culture and tradition that underlies this symbolic capital is a simplistic and reified one that no contemporary anthropologist (and few previous ones) would consciously hold. Thompson's (1991) concept of the moral economy applies to the relationship between 'natives' and anthropologists even more than to the local informal economy. Indigenous Kamchatkans have had scores of ethnographers study various parts of their lives, and people expressed to me a sense of outrage at what they see as betrayals of trust between them and the ethnographers, who were welcomed as honoured visitors. As we deconstruct other people's ethnic identities or declare cultural heritage to be the rightful property of humanity, we must be very careful whose political or economic interests are served by such arguments, for science is not, as Max Weber would have it, ever separate from politics.

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Chapter 14

The Moral Economy of Kinship and Property in Southern China

Susanne Brandtstädter

In Meidao, a fishing village in southern Fujian, south-east China, the monthly income of an average family of four in 1994 was around 600 *yuan renminbi*.[1] In comparison, a wedding that villagers considered 'ordinary' or 'average' (*yibande*) would cost the bridegroom's family a total of 60,000 renminbi, a sum a man could earn in three years of back-breaking work as a fisherman on a foreign labour contract, mostly working on Taiwanese trawlers. For families without access to such work contracts, to provide one's son with both an acceptable wedding and a bride of 'quality' meant plunging deeply into debt.

The most expensive items were betrothal gifts that went to the bride herself: gold necklaces and rings, watches, clothes, and sometimes a colour TV and a hi-fi set or karaoke player. Then there were the expenses for the new couple's wedding chamber: bed, wardrobe, mattress, blankets, and pink satin sheets. A day before the wedding, the bride's family would be presented with 60 kilograms of sweets and 60 kilograms of pork. Most remaining costs were for the wedding itself, including a dance group, one or more bands, and a lavish banquet consisting mainly of meat and fish dishes, along with expensive liquors and cigarettes for 150 persons or more.

The bridegroom's family recovered some of its expenses through 'red envelopes' (*hongbao*), in which friends and family made gifts of money. Their names and the exact sums given were proudly displayed on a board at the family's home. Moreover, a proper bride did not come empty-handed. Especially in cases of village women who had earned large parts of their dowries themselves in world market factories in Southeast Asia or Mauritius, a bride's trousseau was sometimes worth up to 15,000 renminbi. Part of this sum came as cash (preferably in Hong Kong dollars or even US dollars), proudly displayed in a glass frame. The rest would resemble her betrothal

[1] 'People's Money', the national currency of the People's Republic of China. In 1994, the equivalent of US$1 was approximately 8 yuan renminbi.

gifts: gold jewellery, clothes, shoes, or such symbols of modernity and progress as a large colour TV, a VCR, and a karaoke player. By comparison, the formal bride price (*pinjin*) that went to the bride's parents was a negligible sum of 400 renminbi, less than 1% of the bridegroom's family's total expenses.

Weddings are only one example of the (re-)emergence of kinship and other rituals and practices in post-reform rural China that involve the exchange, pooling, or consumption of large quantities of goods. Equally visible are funeral ceremonies, which often last several days and also involve banquets and the hiring of several groups of musicians. Moreover, as in other, equally rich parts of China, all over southern Fujian vast sums are being invested in the (re)building of temples, ancestral halls, and even graves. Official discourse in China generally criticises such practices as wasteful or even 'superstitious' and 'feudal'. From a modernisation perspective, these developments in kinship and property practices must appear puzzling: 'traditional' kinship and marriage practices are apparently being revived in one of China's most developed rural regions, where conventional wisdom would predict a diminution in the 'functions' of kinship and its decoupling from property. How does one explain a massive, apparently 'irrational' waste of resources on events and rituals (in which much of the money literally goes up in smoke) in an environment increasingly shaped by the presence of rural enterprises and inclusion in the world market for goods and labour?

Previous studies have viewed these practices either as part of a hybrid 'ritual economy' that is subversive of capitalism (Yang 2000) or as part of a 'petty capitalist mode of production' that is articulated with the 'tributary mode of production' of the Chinese state (Gates 1996). In this chapter I avoid notions of economic hybridity or articulation, which tend only to reify the dichotomy between capitalism and non-capitalist economies. Instead, I focus on the moral economy of kinship and property as a 'mode of integration' that is part and parcel of China's postsocialist rural economy. I argue that even anthropological models of structural change, property, and kinship have hitherto suffered from an undue emphasis on economic strategies or the material logic of larger systems, at the expense of an engagement with the moral, integrative, and socially productive aspects of property practices. Property practices such as those just mentioned produce kinship (and other forms of stable) relatedness and thus increase integration, predictability, and order in an increasingly competitive and volatile social and economic environment. Only a more holistic view of property itself will help us to understand the dynamic linkages between kinship and capitalism in contemporary China.

Theories of Property, Kinship, and Social Change: A Critique

The insight that kinship forms and property practices are linked is of course an old one in anthropology. The connection has been made by diverse scholars, from Friedrich Engels (whose *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* [1972 (1884)] was largely based on Lewis Henry Morgan's *Ancient Society*) to Edmund Leach (1961), Jack Goody (1976, 1990), and Marilyn Strathern (1985). Claude Lévi-Strauss (1949) implicitly subscribed to the link when he argued that the 'elementary structures of kinship' were formed by the exchange of women, as property objects, by men. These scholars and their theories have little in common, but they all in different ways suggest that modern capitalist societies break this link between kinship forms and property practices or allow it to continue only at the level of meanings or ideas. Kinship appears to be disembedded from property practices, just as, at a higher level, the economy is disembedded from society. Wage labour tends to replace household production, agricultural production contracts, the younger generation becomes more independent and mobile, and 'love', rather than the reproductive strategies of the family, comes to determine the choice of partners. According to this vision, as the long-term public and moral dimensions of property tend to atrophy under capitalism, so do the economic and political dimensions of kinship. The result is a separation or 'purification': property is reduced to a matter of economy; kinship becomes nothing but 'emotion'.

The assumption that kinship and property were intimately linked in 'pre-modern', 'pre-capitalist' societies resulted in an 'enterprising up' of kinship in universalist models of kinship and property practices (McKinnon 2001), rather than a 'socialising up' of property practices.[2] Economic and political interests were added onto (and viewed as giving form to) 'natural' kinship, which stood for itself because it was grounded in biology (McKinnon 2001). Goody's (1976, 1990) model of the relationship between political economies, property strategies, and kinship forms is a case in point. His theory combines British structural functionalism with a Marxist emphasis on modes of production to argue that the 'divergent devolution of property', the endowment of daughters, and a cultural emphasis on monogamy and virginity found in Eurasia developed together with plough agriculture and states. Property and kinship practices reflected the class structure of these societies and the importance of land; they were strategies of status maintenance that involved keeping the means of production within the family and marrying within one's class. The view that the *forms* of kinship

[2] Compare the early critique of 'economistic' explanations of marriage prestations in Comaroff 1980; see also Kipnis 1997: 70–71 for a recent critique focussing on China.

emerge from the class structure, from ways of holding property, and from the nature of power—that is, the 'mode of production'—is a view shared by most Marxist scholars (for the Chinese case, see Gates 1996).

That property and kinship practices, as reproductive strategies, have a material logic in that they reproduce relevant 'differences' at the system level is a truism. However, to argue that this material logic defines the link between kinship and property does not do justice to feelings of solidarity and emotional attachment to kin as socially productive forces in their own right.[3] Even when they are backed up by strong ideological demands on kinship solidarity and economic and political strategies, I argue that neither the material logic of the larger system nor struggles of interest can in themselves explain the production of attachments that 'make' kinship and render blood thicker than water.[4]

Thus, these universalist models of kinship and property neglect, or at least underrate, what I call the moral economic dimension of property practices: the relevance of gift exchange and shares in inclusive ancestral property to producing relatedness, rather than simply its form. Charles Stafford (2000) has argued recently that if we view Chinese kinship simply as the product of a certain ideology, we miss its crucial link to the cycles of *yang* ('nurture') and *laiwang* (literally, 'come and go'), in which relatedness is produced and which are essentially part of a rural gift economy. This focus on the production of relatedness is consistent with the 'new' kinship studies, which reject the assumption that kinship is grounded in biology. However, just as most universalist theories of kinship and property have unilaterally emphasised an economic or a political logic, Stafford for his part emphasises the production of relatedness as a cultural form without questioning the 'dividends' of these practices or exploring how the micro-dynamics of kinship production might be related to the macro-level of social structures. Here, I prefer to follow Peter Schweitzer (2000), who argues that what kinship means can hardly be separated from its uses for the people who

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[3] In his later major work (1990), which includes a detailed study of the Chinese situation, Goody differentiated among a number of additional factors (regional, ideological, political) that have influenced marriage prestations in China. He discussed the relationship between property practices and strategies of 'continuing the house' and also mentioned the issue of 'psychological incorporation', which is relevant to the argument developed in this chapter. His major argument, however, remains concerned with explaining form rather than content; he stresses an economic rather than a social logic in linking property, kinship, and the wider social system.

[4] The blood metaphor is not peculiar to Europe and the United States. In China, the expression *xueyuan guanxi* (blood relations) is frequently used to describe not only kinship but also the larger 'nation-family' (*guojia*) and the special relations among its parts. For example, the PRC government has frequently evoked the notion of 'blood relations' to describe relations between China and Taiwan.

practice it: the dichotomy between emotion and interest, dividends and meaning, is misplaced.[5]

Fieldwork Sites and the Postsocialist Condition

How are links between kinship and property practices changing in the post-socialist conditions of contemporary China?[6] All three of my fieldwork sites, Meidao, Nanjiang, and Baisha, are situated in the coastal areas of South Fujian (see map). These villages traditionally combined subsistence farming and the production of threads and fabrics (a female domain) with commercial fishing and trade (a male domain). They are situated in what has recently become known locally as the 'Minnan Golden Triangle', the region south of the river Min defined by the three major old cities Xiamen, Quanzhou, and Zhangzhou. While *minnan* ('Hokkien') is the name of the Chinese language spoken in the area, 'golden' refers to the region's post-reform economic success as a centre of regional development and a recipient of massive overseas investments and labour migrants from less developed interior provinces. The region is itself a source of vast numbers of migrants, mostly to Southeast Asia (*nanyang,* literally, the 'Southern Ocean'). During the Maoist era, the development of large collective enterprises and rural industries was concentrated in provinces farther north, whereas south-eastern China was, in economic and political terms, a periphery. This was reversed after the reforms, thanks in part to the central government's creation of Special Economic Zones (one of them was Xiamen) in the coastal provinces. More importantly, one cause for political neglect of the region during Mao's time now became a major economic asset. Multiple links with overseas Chinese communities, especially in Southeast Asia, have been a source of massive investment.

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[5] For a similar argument regarding the production of *guanxi* (personal relationships) in China, see Kipnis 1996, 1997. The second of these sources provides an expanded version of his argument, in which Kipnis also discusses the production of kinship relatedness through gift exchange in China as part of a broader production of guanxi. This supports my central argument that property practices must not only be linked to kinship 'forms' but also theorised in relation to the production of relatedness itself. Kipnis's main focus, however, is on the cultural specificities of guanxi production as part of of the production of (historically and socially situated) subjectivities in China. In contrast, I focus in this chapter on the political and economic conditions in rural China after decollectivisation.

[6] To call China a postsocialist country is of course debatable, given the continuing rule of the Chinese Communist Party. What makes rural China, for the purpose of this article, comparable to other postsocialist states is the end of the socialist planned economy and the revival of private markets. I therefore use the term postsocialist in addition to more China-specific terms such as 'post-reform' and 'post-Mao'.

Rural people in the region had engaged in commerce and trade for centuries until collectivisation locked them to the land, both literally (mobility was prohibited) and economically (the marketing network was destroyed). But the reforms did not simply imply a return of the past. The bubble economy of South Fujian in the mid- and late 1990s was integrated into the global market for goods and labour to a degree previously unknown, and wage labour, investments, and rural enterprises played a much larger role than in the past. This virtually turned 'the peasant' in many of the rural areas of this region into a socio-economic category of the past. In Meidao, the place of my earliest fieldwork in the People's Republic of China, in 1994–95 most households still fished or worked in agriculture. But money earned abroad already made a difference in a family's income and provided the funds for a wedding, a dowry, or a new house as well as the savings for old age. Many villagers spent several years abroad on foreign labour contracts, which were organised through a government office. Although this office pocketed a large

part of their earnings, villagers still made several times more abroad than they could at home.

In the two other villages, where I started fieldwork six years later, the local economy had been totally transformed. In Nanjiang, nearly all family income was made outside the village: by children working in the nearby towns, from the ownership of small clothing or shoe factories operated in neighbouring places, from engaging in small trade, or from the remittances of overseas Chinese relatives. Because land in the village retained little productive value for the average family, most families let the fields they had received from their production team lie fallow. The village government then repossessed them and subsequently turned much land into new housing plots (the sale of which became the major income source of the village government). When I lived in Nanjiang, a small number of local entrepreneurs, who grew watermelons and *longyan* fruits commercially, controlled agricultural production in the village.

In Baisha, situated in the vicinity of Xiamen City, land again was no longer valued as a means of agricultural production. The major income source was now the commercial production of shrimp and fish, and villagers struggled hard to find both the cash and the land needed to build their own farms. As in many other Chinese villages, in the mid-1990s the first farms in Baisha were built mostly by cadres or others with good connections to the local district government and generally to the outside world. At the turn of the millennium, the village saw a true explosion in the number of farms. When I visited Baisha for the first time in June 2000, it had 35 shrimp farms. By the end of the year, the number had already risen to 62. In October 2001, when I lived in Baisha for the second time, 115 farms were in operation, and a member of the village cadre told me that, with the construction of even more farms going on everywhere, he expected 130 farms to be running at the end of 2001. Because of the large initial investment needed to open a farm, their ownership was generally shared by several families. Some families also owned shares in different farms. The explosion in the number of farms was the villagers' answer to highly volatile market prices. Often, products could be sold profitably for only a few years, until the market collapsed. Then the production site was abandoned or pulled down and the money was invested elsewhere. Villagers had to respond rapidly with investments when the market was good, in order to gain a sizeable income.

In a process parallel to that of leaving the land (or the sea, for that matter) and turning to wage labour and commercial production, villagers' life-worlds had become 'globalised'. Rural production was now for the private national or even international market, and marketing was organised in trading networks that included traders from Shanghai and Shenzhen as

well as overseas relatives. In Meidao, young men travelled as industrial fishermen on Taiwanese trawlers as far as the Fiji Islands, and young women worked for several years before marriage in world market factories in Singapore, Mauritius, or Indonesia. In Nanjiang, a large number of younger villagers had visited relatives in Hong Kong or Manila, and many villagers depended on financial support from overseas. Others worked in regional urban centres, returning 'home' only on weekends. In Baisha, former farmers and fishermen had become rural entrepreneurs and investors. Conversely, money and expertise coming from overseas helped to fund rural enterprises.

Villagers also eagerly made use of new means of communication, which expanded their horizons and kept them in touch with national and international news, lifestyles, and trends. In 2000, most villagers owned mobile phones. Some had visited, as businessmen or businesswomen or as tourists, national centres such as Beijing and Shanghai or had stayed with relatives in Hong Kong or Manila. Nearly all households had access to several television stations (including, in this region, Taiwanese ones). Though they still called themselves, often self-deprecatingly, *nongmin* ('peasants'), and although the government classified them as such, they were *nongmin* who hardly valued land anymore as a source of living.

The New Postsocialist Family

These developments appear in many ways the opposite of those in other postsocialist states, where decollectivisation sometimes meant the 'return of the peasant' (as in Romania; see Cartwright 2001) and involved economic difficulties that led to an impoverishment of ritual life (as in Bulgaria; see Creed 2002). In South China, the emergence of a huge market for labour and goods was accompanied by what are usually viewed as modern developments within families: the heightened mobility of family members, neolocal residence, 'love marriages', and a general empowerment of the younger generation. Such developments affected families in all the villages I studied. At the same time, the explosion in ritual expenditure clearly defies another main assumption of modernisation theory—that simple causal relationships can be identified between economic development, individualisation, and the rationalisation of economic practices (Yang 2000). The combination currently found in South China suggests that the links between kinship and property are more complex than is usually assumed.

In all the villages I studied, nuclear families had become standard, not only in fact but also as an ideal. In Meidao, the reported average family had fewer than four members, and not a single extended family (i.e., a family in which two married brothers lived in the same household) existed in the village. For many villagers it had become nearly normal that elderly people

often lived in their own houses or at least formed their own households. People were also much more mobile, and families were sometimes geographically far-flung. Family members often worked abroad for several years and returned home either once a year for the Chinese New Year or even, as in the case of fishermen, only after the end of their three-year contract. In Meidao, unmarried women and men went abroad in equal numbers. After marriage, women stayed in the village, whereas men, often directly after their wedding, sought new work abroad in order to earn enough start-up capital for their young family. As one villager told me, men's going abroad regularly followed the same pattern: 'First they go abroad to finance their wedding. Then they go abroad so that they can afford to buy land and build a new house. In the end, they go abroad to save some money for their new families, for example, for the education of children'.

In Nanjiang, a substantial number of young villagers had gone to the Philippines or Hong Kong, depending on where they had relatives, in order to make money, and some had remained there. If they did not go abroad in search of work, adult children often resided permanently outside the village in regional urban centres, visiting their parents over the weekend. In Baisha, local shrimp farms provided a reasonable income for most families, and more people remained in the village (which was only a short drive from Xiamen City). But there, too, it was assumed that the younger generation would eventually leave, because for most families, success meant financing a university education for their children, which would allow them eventually to obtain white-collar employment in the city.

The economic reforms had also clearly changed the relationship between the generations (see also Yan 1997). The availability of wage labour and the development of enormous income differentials between the agricultural and other sectors meant that a family's standard of living depended increasingly on the ability of a son or a daughter to earn income outside the agricultural sector. The parents' generation, which had spent most of its economically active years under Mao, working in production teams, had little of economic value to leave to their children, either in wealth or in rights to agricultural fields, houses, or farms. Even the new shrimp farms were not considered something that would stay in the family, something a son would take over from his father. These changes shifted power in the family towards the younger generation, who now financed a wedding, a dowry, or a new house largely by themselves—with the effect, among other things, that the older generation could no longer keep the family together, even when there was enough wealth to 'inflate' it.

The empowerment of the younger generation also meant that marriage choices now lay somewhere midway between the old practice of arrange-

ment by families and the Western ideal of love marriage. Villagers considered it normal for young people to make their own choices or, if they were not 'forthcoming', to have the decisive word in accepting or rejecting a prospective spouse who was introduced to them. But it was still unthinkable that they would insist on a partner their parents had rejected. At the same time, the conjugal relationship became far more important as a source of emotional security than it had been in the past, a trend confirmed by similar observations in Taiwan and in other parts of mainland China (Brandtstädter 1994; Yan 1997). Personal attachments or friendships outside the family also increasingly played a role in choosing alliances (see Yan 2001). Superficially, the new postsocialist families in the three villages and their strategies for generating income and attaining status thus increasingly looked like the 'modern' families of the model West. People's attachment to land, in terms of both income and residence, had loosened, social and geographical mobility had vastly increased, families had become fully dependent on market exchange and wage labour, and the younger generation was financially far more independent of its parents than ever before.

New family forms, the new centrality of the conjugal bond, and the empowerment of the younger generation were directly reflected in the emergence of new forms of marriage prestations. These are discussed at length by Yan Yunxiang (1996: 193–200; also see Siu 1993: 183). As he observed, the bride now receives part of the bridewealth herself, a practice that, according to Yan, developed from the 1960s onwards. This implies that the bride is also now actively involved in the marriage negotiations, something unthinkable in the past. The driving factor behind the scene is often the bridegroom, who encourages his fiancée to demand more from his own parents but whose role in the negotiations remains largely obscured. As Yan says, the future husband's interest in this is that the direct betrothal gifts now make up the most important part of the conjugal fund.

What Yan witnessed in northern China was also the case in Fujian. Brides were endowed by both their own parents and the groom's, and they were ferocious negotiators who frequently tested the limits by demanding 'just another gold ring' from the bridegroom's parents. In one such case that I witnessed, after the wedding ceremonies were over the new husband pointed to his wife and jokingly complained to me (with barely concealed pride) how 'expensive' she had been for his family, while she laughed in response. These developments confirm Goody's overall model in the sense that changes in marriage prestations obviously reflect changes in the pattern of property holding in rural China.

Given the foregoing 'modern' developments in family relations, one would rather expect to see a gradual reduction in marriage prestations—that

is, the separation of kinship and marriage from economic concerns and strategies. Why, then, this new emphasis on property at all? Why a spending of funds on a revival of lineage structures and lineage committees, why the surge in the value of marriage prestations, and why an outright potlatch of property consumption at weddings and funerals—major events at which extra-domestic kinship is being reinstated?

The Growth of Kinship in Post-Reform Rural China

One obvious way to explain a renewed emphasis on property as part of the postsocialist condition in rural China is to view all of these practices as cases of conspicuous consumption at occasions where prestige and social hierarchies are being renegotiated. Stevan Harrell and Sara Dickey (1985) argue that in complex, stratified, and highly competitive societies, dowry systems emerge not simply from strategies of status maintenance (as Goody says) but also from those of prestige building. In Bourdieu's terms (1977), one important incentive for the display and consumption of wealth at a wedding would thus be its transformation into symbolic capital.

There is no doubt that the dismantling of the state-planned economy made wealth again the major source of prestige and status in China and spread competition to each sphere of village life. In all villages, a large dowry was, for women, an important way to accumulate prestige, and the sizes of dowries were a main area of competition. The bridegroom and his family, on the other hand, could accumulate prestige by providing a lavish banquet, and the main areas of competition concerned the number of tables, the quality of the food, and the entertainment provided, as well as the number of red envelopes the family received. A third arena in which much wealth was consumed was that of public ancestral rites and the rebuilding and lavish endowment of ancestral halls. The consumption of wealth, as villagers themselves said, in this case both symbolised the present status of a localised lineage and ensured the group's future prosperity. As a status symbol, it also constituted a claim to power in the village.

But although patently not 'wrong', even this broader view of property practices casts them in a utilitarian light as economic, political, and social *strategies* in which the *ultima ratio* is to raise one's own position against that of others or to increase one's personal benefits. This view, too, neglects kinship attachments as socially productive forces in their own right. My argument is much more straightforward: The exchange, pooling, and consumption of property in kinship rituals in postsocialist China was triggered first and foremost by a new emphasis on kinship relations themselves, a result of the new importance of kinship as a mode of integration (see also Brandtstädter 2003).

Although a stated aim of socialist policies had been to replace 'peasant localism' with loyalty to state and government and to break the 'fetters of the sib' in rural China, kinship relations remained an important basis for support and solidarity in socialist China (e.g., Ruf 1998; Siu 1993). But in all three villages people confirmed to me that kinship relations had become even more valuable after the economic reforms than they had been during the Mao era. This new importance was not perceived as a contradiction to the new independence of the younger generation or to frequent complaints by old people about sons who 'do not care' (*bu guan*) and daughters-in-law who just 'do not want to listen' anymore (*bu yao ting hua*). On the contrary, investment in kinship was triggered by an environment in which the existing rules of the game in interpersonal relations were increasingly up for grabs.

During my earliest stay in Meidao, I asked both the head of a poorer village family and a local lineage leader about their impressions of the changing meaning of patrilineal kinship. Was it now more important or less important than during the Mao years? Ahong, the poorer villager, found ties with his agnatic relatives less important than during the collective era. As he said, during the time of the production teams, he and his *tangxiongdi* (paternal cousins) had lived next door to each other, had worked together in the same team, and had often helped each other out. Now the cousins lived in another part of village, and there was hardly any laiwang ('come and go') between his family and theirs. Ahong told me that if he asked someone for help today, he would turn to his wife's brother, with whom he had a much better and closer relationship. He also worked in the same boat group as this relative.

The lineage leader, on the other hand, insisted that patrilineal kinship had increased in importance as an organising force in the village. He pointed out that lineage affiliations often decided village elections in Meidao, that villagers again listened more to lineage leaders than to village cadres, and that the 'pressure' (*yali*) that larger lineages exerted on smaller ones was again heavy. Moreover, supra-local networks between related lineages had been rebuilt, and he frequently attended meetings with other representatives at the county capital. He said that Ahong had little laiwang with his cousins because he was poor and not well respected in the village. But, as the lineage leader pointed out, despite the emotional distance between Ahong and his cousins, which meant little interaction between them in daily life, if Ahong got into trouble with outsiders, his cousins would be at his side immediately.

What brought out the contradictory statements between these two men, obviously, is that I did not define what I meant by 'important' (*zhongyao*). Because he had no political clout in the village, Ahong had spontaneously understood important in terms of daily economic cooperation

and support, whereas the lineage leader had understood it in terms of political solidarity.

The postsocialist 'growth' in agnatic and non-agnatic extra-domestic kinship, each type relating to a different social arena, was directly related to property practices. The (re-)emergence of corporate patrilineal kinship as a political force in the village was perhaps the more visible, especially in Nanjiang and Meidao, where there were strong overseas links and numerically dominant 'first settler' lineages. There, villagers had lavishly rebuilt the free-standing ancestral halls, often financed by money donated from overseas, and lineage rituals were again celebrated in a grandiose fashion. Elected lineage committees had again taken up the tasks of organising the day-to-day affairs of the lineage and of the ancestral hall, organising the major rituals, and, most importantly, managing the often substantial lineage funds (in one case the lineage fund was worth more 350,000 renminbi, or around US$43,000). In Nanjiang, the largest 'elder brother' lineage also regained from the village government a row of houses at the local market, which it rented out to shop owners much as it had before the revolution. Without corporate property, as people told me repeatedly, the lineage as a corporate group had been practically defunct: it did not exist politically, it had no leadership, and it did not organise ancestral rituals (see Brandtstädter 2001).

A similar property link can be found in the case of non-agnatic kinship networks, which are maintained primarily by frequent visits and gift exchanges—by what Stafford (2000) calls the cycles of yang and laiwang. The exchange of marriage prestations, dowry, and bride price, and also the feasting during the wedding, is the birth hour of these relations, without which full-fledged affinal relations are unlikely to develop (Gallin and Gallin 1985). Because they are rooted not in inherited shares of ancestral property but in gift exchange, affinal relations are, from the very start, more a matter of choice and good feelings (*ganqing*) than is patrilineal kinship. Women play a central role in maintaining these relationships and emotional attachments (also see Brandtstädter 1994; Kipnis 1997: 87–90). In that sense, the production of non-agnatic kinship is closely related to the production of *guanxi* (personal relationships) in gift exchange (Brandtstädter 1994; Kipnis 1996: 306).

Although personal choice and emotions now appear to play a larger role in kinship, I suggest that what Yan (2001) views as new developments—the importance of agency, the uncertainty of kinship alliances, and the 'flattening' of kinship—have always been central features distinguishing affinal relations from patrilineal kinship. Cooperation within hierarchical or 'official' patrilineal kinship was prescribed, but relations between agnates

also tended to include an element of competition. This implies that conflicts of interest often quickly terminated agnatic cooperation when a common property basis weakened (as in the case of the break-up of joint families; see Cohen 1976).

In the highly competitive, stratified, and newly mobile society of post-reform southern China, it comes as no surprise that male villagers preferred members of a wife's or mother's natal family over agnates for economic cooperation. In Meidao, fishermen overwhelmingly worked together with affines or matrilateral relatives—because, I was told, the 'feeling was better' and because a wife or mother could mediate should problems arise. Agricultural fields were often swapped with relatives, who did not ask for rent, and here again, support came overwhelmingly from members of a wife's or mother's natal family. I found the same pattern of mutual economic support in the other two villages.

What does this mean for the fate of kinship in postsocialist rural China? Although friendship and emotion were important in the choice of partners (and had increased in importance), people tended to turn first not to unrelated friends but to friends who were also kin. In South Fujian, arguably one of the most developed rural areas in all of China, kinship thus was not replaced by friendship, but friendship played a greater role *in* kinship when it came to daily economic cooperation. In Baisha, even a conscious return to kinship seemed to have taken place. In the early years of shrimp farming in the village, the majority of shrimp farms were jointly owned by friends. Then people returned to working with relatives, because 'people from the same family' (*yi jia de ren*) would not so easily fall out with each other in the face of problems and sell the farm. This ability to weather storms was an important secret of success in a volatile economic environment. As in Meidao, when it came to the choice of kin, families preferred alliances with affines or members of a woman's natal family over those with agnates. Significantly, these were now considered to be *yi jia de ren.*

Relatives were also the source of important monetary loans, and again these were most often affinal relatives or members of a wife's or mother's natal family. Women not only played the most important role in organising these funds but also often ran the farms themselves. The increasing preference for 'affective' affinal kinship reflects environmental factors such as the new mobility, flexibility, and competitiveness, but also a breakdown in hierarchical solidarity in daily interactions, which is also found at the level of individual families (see also Yan 1997). In her article on changing dowry and brideprice in Guangdong Province, Helen Siu (1993: 183–86) argued that because of this breakdown, the elder generation had started to contribute eagerly to the new conjugal funds, hoping thereby to ensure some intergen-

erational reciprocity. She also described how mothers-in-law, for that reason, travelled long distances to support their daughters-in-law after the arrival of a new baby. To use Stafford's terms, by giving more now, they hoped not to be left out of the cycle of yang later.

But given the breakdown of hierarchical solidarity in personal relations and the related emphasis on constructing personal relatedness through gift exchange, what factors did support lineage building in such an environment? What were the dividends of corporate patrilineal kinship? The property link of such kinship has long been acknowledged in the anthropology of China. Recently, however, scholars have more directly seen profit-oriented strategies and joint economic interests, especially among the elites, as the 'cause' of lineage building in Late Imperial China, rather than 'kinship mores'. As Hill Gates (1996) has argued, the lineage was the logical form of organisation in an environment shaped by a tributary, predatory state and an increasingly strong local 'petty capitalist mode of production'. This was because the emphasis placed by the state on ancestor worship made lineages both impeachable and, at the same time, perfect tax-dodging devices, since their kinship form concealed their real economic ('petty capitalist') character.

There is no state-sponsored ancestor cult in the People's Republic, and lineages—in official discourse 'feudal' (*fengjian*) holdovers—as intrinsically local (as opposed to national) institutions and possible challengers to the authority of the state, are highly suspicious in the eyes of the state. At the same time, their ability to mobilise resources from overseas for local development and to create lasting links to overseas Chinese communities is much welcomed by local governments. But even if lineages benefited rural elites by allowing them to control even more resources (both social and economic), this hardly explains why they appealed to the poor. It seems absurd that, because of enduring cultural values alone, the 'losers' in economic reform would gladly return to institutions of the pre-revolutionary era that had enshrined economic inequality and hierarchy. It seems unlikely that they listened to lineage leaders simply because they had always courted authority. As I have argued elsewhere (e.g., Brandtstädter 2003), the dividends of a restoration of kinship institutions (along with temple communities) in post-reform rural China are not simply money and power but also integration, order, and collectivity—that is, the creation of moral communities. The rebuilding of these local institutions helped to restrain arbitrariness, 'negative reciprocity', and rampant competition in community relations and to impose a morally acceptable code of behaviour on an environment increasingly characterised by the maxim 'anything (that makes money) goes'.

But as I mentioned earlier, this rebuilding required not simply a survival of kinship norms but also the building up of a collective person out of collective property relations. It required also the consumption of wealth for refurbishing the ancestral halls and for rituals such as *jizu* ('remembering the ancestors') on the winter solstice, when all lineage members feast together in the hall (cf. Yang 2000). Lineages in the villages I studied accumulated collective property from two sources: from the local state, by regaining their property in buildings and (use rights) in land—that is, by transforming socialist collective property (back) into lineage collective property— and from private donations, mostly monetary ones. This property was inalienable in the sense that it could not be squandered without risking the weakening or even the destruction of the collective relations it represented, because it was meant to provide for the ancestors (or, in the case of a temple, it belonged to the gods) and because every member held a share in it (*you fen*). Leadership within this collective derived not simply from wealth but from extra-large donations to the ancestral hall and to lineage rituals. Thus it required some form of reciprocity to the community as a whole.

In Nanjiang, where strong overseas ties meant unusually wealthy ancestral halls, lineage committees had also begun investing in their neighbourhoods by building new streets and meeting places for old people or by giving prizes to families whose children had managed to enter secondary education. That is, lineages took on tasks that villagers expected of the local state but that the latter would not or could not fulfil. Moreover, the transparency and accountability of collective property relations within the lineage stood, for the villagers, in strong positive contrast to the obscure finances of the state, where a majority suspected local cadres of enriching themselves first and of 'privatising' taxes (see Brandtstädter 2001). The rebuilding of local institutions in rural China thus also represented a critique of the present 'state of the local state', while at the same time the morals embodied by those local institutions bore a strong imprint of the collective ideals and visions of good government of the socialist period (see Feuchtwang 2002: 205–7, 210). Property practices such as the 'recollectivisation' of property by lineages and temples were central to this.

Property and Kinship as a Moral Economy

I have argued that in postsocialist China the investment of resources in gift exchange, marriage prestations, kinship rituals, and ancestral halls is crucially linked to the importance of kinship. Property practices are not driven solely by the material conditions of the larger system (its mode of production), nor, in the widest sense, do they reflect only rational cost-benefit calculations. They are also driven by the desire to produce stable forms of

relatedness in an unstable environment. Property practices must be analysed as total social phenomena, in Mauss's sense, in which 'all kinds of institutions are given expression at one and the same time—religious, juridical, and moral ... likewise economic ones' (Mauss 1990 [1925]: 3). This concerns both the corporate ownership of ancestral property and the rural gift economy. Lineages have no collective existence or social relevance without shared property rights, which are inalienable, although the property itself is not (see Faure 1986). Full-blown affinal relations depend upon the initial 'gift' exchange of brideprice and dowry, and they are crucially articulated (as much as is patrilineal kinship) with the two cycles of reciprocity, yang and laiwang (Stafford 2000).

Strategies of status maintenance and prestige building obviously play a role in these property practices, but prestige could just as well be accumulated by forms of conspicuous consumption that do not involve others (e.g., by spending money on a car or a big house), and status nowadays might be better secured by investing the money in a bank. The difference is that a lavish wedding ceremony or a large donation to an ancestral hall builds both prestige *and* kinship relatedness. Status and prestige considerations also seem to play a subordinate role in the case of parents eagerly contributing to a new conjugal fund, as described by Siu (1993). To view these practices as simply reflecting an economic rationale would also be grossly misleading, as it would be in the case of any gift exchange: the dividends of these exchanges are first and foremost relatedness itself.[7] This does not preclude the relations thus created from paying off in the future, or the prime motivation of the givers (e.g., the parents) from being utilitarian. But it is the relatedness created through the gift, and not the economic value of the original investment, from which these returns follow (see Kipnis 1996: 308, 1997). As Alan Smart (1993: 389) writes:

> The fundamental feature of the gift is not found in the motivations of the givers, nor in the binding but misrecognized gift-debt on the receivers, nor yet in the distinctiveness of the relations between the two parties; rather, the distinctiveness of the gift is constituted through the need to conform to the demands of the gift as a social form with its own etiquette. For the gift to succeed as a gift, it must follow the social forms that usually prescribe that it be an unconditional offer of a prestation in which explicit recognition of instrumental goals is excluded from the performance.

[7] See Liu 2000: 70–71 for a contrasting opinion.

The efflorescence of kinship in post-reform rural China apparently differs from similar 'revivals of tradition' in other postsocialist countries, where 'demodernisation' has been seen as the cause. Elsewhere, many rural areas have been cut off from more industrialised zones, people have been forced back to subsistence agriculture, and state structures have collapsed. The rural condition in the prosperous regions of southern China appears very different. Yet it is similar in one crucial point: here, too, an established social order broke down and state institutions were unable to create trust, integration, and reciprocity in social relations. Although state *power* was still present, post-reform state institutions did not help reproduce the moral world of Chinese communities. On the contrary: postsocialism was an inherently volatile environment in which not only did market prices fluctuate wildly but also the old rules of the game in state-society relations had broken down. Representatives of the state were unwilling or unable to create new binding rules to 're-embed' social relations. As a result, in combination with highly volatile markets, risk factors multiplied. One risked losing out to others in terms of status and prestige, losing large sums of money in failed investments, missing an economic opportunity, being cheated in transactions, and, above all, ending up destitute, without support from friends or family.

Anthropologists have long pointed to the socially destructive aspects of capitalism, reproducing Karl Polanyi's (1944) nightmare vision of disembedded societies ruled by the 'self-regulating market'. This vision is exaggerated insofar as it assumes a 'Great Divide' between capitalist and non-capitalist societies. As Georg Elwert has shown (1987), capitalist economies must also be embedded in institutions and social relations from which arbitrariness and short-term individual profit-maximising are excluded. These 'moral economic enclaves' create trust and dependability; by attributing honour and shame in the public sphere, they create a shared public morality. In postsocialist rural China, especially in more developed regions such as southern Fujian, property was transformed into relatedness not simply because kinship connections were important to 'get things done' but also because kinship filled a regulatory, or moral, void. Kinship served to stabilise and to integrate local society in a rapidly changing, highly competitive environment in which state institutions were often perceived as serving private interests. Affinal relations, because of their non-hierarchical, non-corporate, non-localised, network-like structure, came to embed economic cooperation and the sphere of exchange, whereas corporate, localised, patrilineal kinship came to embed increasingly volatile political relations. Both helped to increase predictability in social interactions, where supra-local economic, political, and legal institutions were patently failing to do so.

This production of relatedness in southern China through a moral economy of kinship and property is a somewhat different process from those described by Edward Thompson (1971) and James Scott (1976), in which the moral economy stands opposed to profit-maximising strategies or capitalist economies. [8] Like Elwert, I hold that the reproduction of communities in capitalist economies also depends on a moral economy. Models such as Goody's, which link property to kinship through patterned strategies and interests that arise from a mode of production, are not so much invalid as insufficient. To do justice to the importance of property and kinship practices, we need a more inclusive concept such as mode of integration (Dalton 1981, following Polanyi 1944). This allows us to recognise the value of kinship as relatedness, instead of viewing kinship simply as a vehicle for 'other'—that is, political or economic—interests.

With Kipnis (1997) and Smart (1993), I argue that interests and emotions are not opposed or locked in a zero-sum situation. The result of the exchange, pooling, and consumption of resources is the production of relatedness, but this is not to deny the agency of self-interested individuals who pursue their status- and prestige-building strategies. The transformation of interests into attachments or emotions necessitates another transformation, namely, that of the goods themselves: from commodities into gifts, and from private, alienable household objects into inalienable, collective ancestral property. In the terms of Maurice Bloch and Jonathan Parry (1989), goods must be transferred from the short-term cycle of exchange, in which short-term, individual profit is the aim, to the long-term cycle of exchange, in which the reproduction of the total social and moral order is at stake. To understand the 'South China paradox'—the 'wasting' of property on kinship rituals, ancestor halls, and marriage exchanges in a region that is in many ways more modern than any other in China—we have to approach property relations and the production of kinship not only in the context of the existing mode of production but also in terms of an encompassing mode of integration.

[8] Both Yang (2000) and Gates (1996), in their work on China's different 'economies', subscribe to this basic opposition.

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Chapter 15

The Postsocialist Agrarian Situation in Southern Ethiopia

Wolde Gossa Tadesse

In this chapter I introduce the rural situation in southern Ethiopia as it has developed since the 1890s in the context of the modern state. I argue that the agrarian problem there is unresolved and suggest the legalisation of indigenous tenure and minimisation of state involvement in agriculture as steps towards its solution. The study is part of my current research in Gamo, Konso, and Hor country in south-western Ethiopia, but I have no doubt that similar cases can be found among other southern agricultural groups. The larger issues concerning the hardships inflicted on farmers by external interference in local property systems are comparable to those discussed in the other chapters in this volume, based on the Eurasian experience of socialism. The main difference is that in this Ethiopian case, socialism was just one relatively short-lived phase in a much longer history of violent appropriations.

More than a century ago, a large part of southern Ethiopia consisted of autonomous political entities whose economies depended on crop cultivation, animal herding, and interethnic trade. In the 1890s, Emperor Menelik conquered much of the region. The brutalities of this conquest and the suffering of millions of people have been recorded in a number of accounts of the period and in recent research (Bulatovich 1993; Darley 1969 [1935]; Donham and James 1986; Garretson 2000; Guèbrè-Sellassié 1930; Hodson n.d.; Vanderheym 1896). Slave and cattle raiding and the forcible appropriation of land and labour characterised the economy. The *gabbar* system assigned 50 to 100 peasants to every soldier and officer to work on the land and provide domestic labour. Memories of the atrocities and human tragedies experienced at the time haunt Ethiopian political and social life to this day.

Italy's occupation of Ethiopia (1935–41), under the pretext of abolishing slavery in the name of civilisation, brought more political instability and the appropriation of large areas of land for a *colonizzazone agricola* by

Italian soldiers (Larebo 1994; McCann 1995). During this struggle, farmers were trapped between the colonial army and partisan groups. The former demanded obedience; the latter wanted to maintain entitlements in the gabbar tradition. Both were brutal in their use of force (Olmstead 1997; Strecker 2002). Like their predecessors, the Italians enslaved southern farmers and severely affected their food production. All southern Ethiopian communities were forced to give conscripts to the colonial government.

The post-war period saw the rehabilitation of Haile Selassie's government, but the state bureaucracy could not control the countryside effectively. Former gabbar owners sought to retrieve their titles, despite the government's efforts to introduce taxes and salaries. Many northern settlers were allocated *qalad* land, even though it was already occupied, as a reward for fighting the Italians.[1] Common grazing land and other resources held by various groups were allocated as crown property. In the area of my field research, the new owners extracted crops and cash from local people in exchange for allowing them to use wood and pasture. The population was also adversely affected by the appropriation of land held by pastoral and agricultural groups, in favour of plantation farmers. By the end of the 1960s, young, educated plantation farmers stood opposed to a multitude of dispossessed pastoralists and farmers. The state established community development farms and took much pastoral land in the Rift Valley for game parks, without paying compensation. Armed settlers from central and northern regions of Ethiopia were settled to 'civilise' southern farmers and serve as a contingency force in case of rebellion by former landowners. Hundreds of representatives of the expropriated travelled to Addis Ababa to appeal to their emperor for justice, but their demonstrations were in vain; many were imprisoned and others exiled.

Against this background, expectations of regaining land and holding it according to indigenous tenure were high when the Ethiopian revolution took place in 1974. In looking at how the agrarian question was approached during Ethiopia's socialist revolution and its aftermath, I take my cases from Otchollo and Chencha territories in the province of Gamo Gofa, as it was named until 1984. Both territories are farmed by Gamo peoples, each with many subdivisions, who occupy the mountain terrain, the escarpment of the Rift Valley, and the irrigated lowlands on the western shores of Lake Abaya (see map).

[1] *Qalad* land was land belonging to a specified rural group—usually fields, pastures, or forest land—that was appropriated to benefit northerners.

The Revolutionary Period

The revolution in Ethiopia was generally welcomed, because it promised to heal past wounds. Many rural groups in the south took this promise seriously and hoped to regain their land, autonomy, and personhood. One of the first decrees of the military government (4 March 1975) nationalised all rural land. A ministry for land reform was set up, and 60,000 university and secondary-school student volunteers helped implement the decree. The previous state structure was dismantled and replaced by a new one, bringing state power closer to farming life. Farming and herding populations were put under new administrative units known as *qebele,* which comprised not more than 800 hectares.[2] The new administrative officers meticulously screened the population to prevent former powerholders from re-establishing their positions in rural areas. Fearful that discontinuity in leadership could result

[2] The smallest territorial unit of the revolutionary period, stipulated in Proclamation no. 31, 1975, was based on the imperial unit called the *ch'iqa,* the territory of a tax collector chief.

in chaos and disruption, many local groups brought members of respected families to power. Some local chiefs with links to the imperial past fled to provincial towns and to Addis; others were jailed. A few leaders with good reputations managed to stay with their people. Village land belonging to unpopular representatives of the imperial state was appropriated and distributed to craftsmen. In the south, land was not redistributed to the public as stipulated in the decree or as reported during the revolutionary period, for fear of severe consequences not only in the economy but also in the politics, kinship, and religious organisation of local groups. In addition, there was neither the manpower nor the facilities to undertake the necessary cadastral work.

Qebele farmers' associations were gradually drawn further into the political system than was initially envisaged. A second proclamation in 1975 consolidated the powers of peasant associations and gave them legal status. Their aim was 'to enable the peasantry to participate in the struggle against feudalism and imperialism by building its consciousness in line with *Hibrettesebawinet* [socialism]'.[3] More specifically, cooperative societies, women's associations, and peasant defence squads were to be formed. Later the qebeles were also empowered to recruit conscripts for the national army, which eventually marred their image. None of the farmers associations' duties and responsibilities were aimed at promoting farming. Qebeles were later merged to establish farmers' service cooperatives. The cooperatives purchased essentials from government stores in the capital and sold these in their shops at low prices.[4] Finally, a nationwide structure was established to integrate farmers at the national level. At the same time, the state launched a massive 'villagisation' scheme to settle farmers and herders according to a central plan.

The villagisation project paid no attention to crop patterns, the history of land ownership, or the relationship of clans and lineages to land. Land use by farmers and herders was ignored. The Department of Agriculture was ignorant of local variation in the values people attached to their land. For example, among the Omotic-speaking peoples of Gamo Gofa, the link between people and land—the land of the main house, specific fields, assembly places, places of sacrifice, and mountain pastures—was extremely important.

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[3] *Hibrettesebawinet* is an Amharic term, literally meaning 'united humanity'; here it means socialism. Provisional Military Administrative Council, 14 December 1975: 108.

[4] One such cooperative in Doko owned two trucks and trailers, an electric generator, and a shop. Annually it paid students' school registration fees and the costs of textbooks and pens. It also paid its members bonuses for the purchase of salt for the annual Masqal festival. Another cooperative in Doko Gembela owned trucks and organised a commendable shopping service for its members.

Land had to be handled with respect and even sanctity, but such aspects were never considered.

Opposition to the scheme was necessarily cautious. People in highland Gamo built bamboo frames and then never completed their houses, explaining that the frames needed be left in the sun for a long time to make the bamboo insect-resistant. The attempt to villagise the *enset*-growing mountain area of Gamo disrupted agricultural work and peaceful life.[5] People in these areas found it difficult to perform the necessary rituals for initiating different phases of agricultural work, because it was inappropriate to perform rituals on land other than one's own. Pushing boundary markers beyond one's own land remains a taboo to this day and is considered as bad as setting a house on fire. In the mountains, farmers maintain a delicate balance between terraced agriculture, root crop gardening, cereal cultivation, mountain herding, and tree growing. Meadows serve both for fodder and for short-term grazing around homes. A two-house system allows for specialisation in herding; the animals are kept at some times in mountain pastures and at other times in the lowlands, to enable manure collection for use in adjacent fields. Intensive gardening is practised on land around the main house, land that is also used for planting pulses and various tuberous plants. Bamboo and other tree groves are grown along gullies, in valleys, and around homesteads. When villagisation was launched, no consideration was given to the complexities of this system of agriculture and the implications of its ecology.[6]

In lowland eastern Gamo areas, villagisation had already been introduced in the 1960s by the imperial government, which had assisted some farmers in Otchollo to settle in their secondary homes. Villagisation in the lowlands was generally chaotic, because it coincided with the establishment of agricultural producers' cooperatives (APCs). As in the mountain region, where groves of enset took some seven years to mature, banana, mango, lime, and papaya groves were assets that people did not wish to abandon when instructed to move their homes. They received neither compensation nor apology for losses incurred.

Agricultural Producers' Cooperatives

APCs were launched in the most fertile agricultural areas, where the state also had an interest in developing state farms. The APCs of the study area are located in the lowlands at the foot of the Gamo Mountains, which rise

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[5] *Enset* (*Enset ventricosum*) is an edible plant widely grown and consumed in south-western Ethiopia. Its groves resemble banana groves.

[6] See Beriso 2002, Claphham 2002, and Naty 2002 for the objectives and effects of villagisation in other southern Ethiopian communities.

west of the Rift Valley. The land is fertile and was in the past used to grow sorghum, cotton, and fruits. The highland populations of this region were famous for the blankets and clothing they made; they depended on the lowlands for a supply of cotton.

Prior to 1975 the lowland areas whose names are preceded by Otchollo were the property of various groups who had their main homes in the mountains. Both fields and irrigation canals were administered by *halaqa* chiefs, who were responsible for the administration of both the mountain neighbourhoods and the lowland homes.[7] Until recently, the number of Otchollo neighbourhoods corresponded to the number of lowland fields and homes (known as *motsa,* pl. *motsata*). The lowland houses were subsidiary to the corresponding main houses in the mountains and had ritual and other forms of juniority to the main house. People who lived and laboured in these fields also herded animals and produced lowland crops for the main house. These lowland possessions were to mountain farmers as cattle camps are to transhumant pastoralists. The occupants of the fields were juniors of each family and usually the physically able, who could repel attacks by enemies who crossed the lake to obtain human trophies (Abeles 1977: 458; cf. Tadesse 1999). The juniors were dependent on the main house in the mountains, the halaqa chiefs, and the local assemblies for decisions concerning cultivation and herding.[8]

In Gamo a person is born into a patrilineage. It is usually men who hold title to land; women can inherit land from a husband but pass it on to a son of their preference. In core areas land is owned in the fullest sense by clan members individually. This mode of ownership and pattern of settlement was reproduced in motsa settlements, regardless of their location. Various forms of control and maintenance of land (pastures, groves, places of assembly, markets, graveyards) developed as a result of complex social rights and obligations. Membership in a community is expressed by the burial of one's umbilical cord in the gardens of the main house, by belonging to a work group—that is, by the connection one establishes to the land as one grows up working motsa land as both herder and cultivator—by holding an allotted space in the market place, by taking a halaqa title, by organising feasts to the fathers of the land, and by taking a seat in the assembly of fathers to decide on matters of common interest, both to the section of which

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[7] *Halaqa* are persons who have achieved the status of 'fathers of the land', which is offered to them by their respective territorial unit. They become speakers in local assemblies and decide on matters of common interest, including fields, pastures, forest groves, and irrigation. They also co-ordinate religious and political matters.

[8] See Abeles 1983 for further analysis of Otchollo political and spatial structures.

one is a member and to the larger group, which is composed of many sections.

Against this cultural and ideational background, APCs were established in 1975, following the model of East Germany. Administrators, politicians, and junior cadres of the Department of Agriculture competed to fulfil quotas for establishing the new organisations. In their haste, officials used force and intimidation against farmers. Cases of eviction, imprisonment, and beatings were reported in the first stage of cooperativisation. Seventeen prominent farmers who had earlier taken land cases to the crown court were targeted and jailed.[9] Others who refused to join the APCs were given non-irrigable land on the edges of hills. Landless labourers were brought from the town of Arba Minch and given membership in place of those who refused. Former landowners who refused membership did so in protest against decisions requiring them to give up some of their land to their former labourers. These owners also feared that there would be further appropriations of animals and money to help establish the APCs' poorer members, those who had no traditional entitlement to the land.[10]

Decree number 31 of April 1975, Article 6, gave hired labourers rights of possession over the land they tilled. Labourers who worked in the fields of Otchollo and Chencha were thus entitled to a portion of such land. For example, an Otchollo man who had employed four labourers on his five hectares of land was left with only one hectare. This was a second blow for the farmers in the four cooperatives in Otchollo and the single Chencha cooperative—the land decree not only failed to give them secure rights to their own land, but by setting up the APCs, it also appropriated their remaining land. The requirement to contribute animals came as a further surprise, which increased their insecurity and lack of confidence in the state.

Case Study: Otchollo Mille

Mille was villagised in 1967, during the imperial period.[11] It had belonged to Otchollo landowners but was later appropriated for distribution to 150 Otchollo farmers together with 150 non-Otchollo landless labourers from the

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[9] Some successful farmers moved to other places as traders, leaving their families behind. Others, who had some moveable property, were evicted, and still others, who were richer and more influential, were sent to prison from time to time for refusing to join the APCs or for allegedly inciting others to decline membership.

[10] Farmers engaged in land litigation with the state expected all unlawfully appropriated land to be returned to its legitimate owners.

[11] No documents are accessible in the offices of the former APCs in the study area, although Otchollo Mille did have a badly damaged member's registry from the APC period. Information was gathered through interviews with former leaders and members of the cooperatives.

Arba Minch state farm. Previously, the Otchollo owners of Mille had engaged in profitable blanket weaving and had employed itinerant farmers to work the land for them and to share the produce. Later the owners and the labourers fell out, and this ended in a bloody conflict. The provincial administration, which had been eyeing Otchollo land, took this opportunity to block access to the land by either party for two years, before imposing villagisation in 1967.

This situation lasted until the 1975 land decree, which awarded land entitlements to yet more people, who worked and shared produce with the 300 member households. During the establishment of the APCs, Mille farmers and those from other areas nearby refused to volunteer. They were suspicious of the government's interest in their land and feared its appropriation. Armed police and militia were brought in to intimidate and take to prison those who refused to join. Additionally, there was much pressure upon farmers by politicians, administrative bureaucrats, and Department of Agriculture experts. Eventually, the approximately 300 Otchollo Mille farmers decided to establish a 'second-level' APC in 1978. Their common fields added up to 900 hectares, and each farmer had an additional 1,000 square metres for residence and garden. Plough oxen were pooled; those who did not bring oxen contributed an equivalent sum over the following years. This decision was designed to keep officials away, to buy time, and to avoid having to spend many hours listening to propaganda on forming the next level of APC.

Mille farmers who established the second-level cooperative were split into 17 work groups, each with 12 pairs of plough oxen. They were given quotas for the production of maize, cotton, sweet potatoes, and bananas. Members kept cows and small stock and planted fruit trees in their private gardens. The cooperative eventually bought two tractors, installed a flour mill, built a school, and inherited a service shop from the previous farmers' association. It also had three storehouses and an office. The leadership was formed by an executive committee of 9 people, a local court of 3 members, an armed group of 30, and a party office. Thirty female-led households and 15 former members of the army were allowed to keep a hectare of land each and were exempted from the obligation to enter work groups.

Dissatisfaction with the APCs mounted soon after they were established. Otchollo members felt alienated from the production process and complained about being powerless, because they had no control over their produce. Farmers lamented the loss of their habitual autonomous practices. They could not provide their children with greens as was the custom. They could not provide their kin in the mountains with 'first harvest', that is, with grain that was the prerogative of the 'first house'. The grain they had previ-

ously supplied to their friends (*jala*) in mountain communities now went to APC stores. Members were also unhappy about the valuation of different kinds of labour. They thought it unfair to equalise different kinds of work to determine a member's income. They considered it unacceptable, for example, that their leaders scored points for attending meetings. Sitting inside a cool house, they felt, should be valued in the same way as thinning cotton in the scorching sun and performing other kinds of agricultural work.

The way the APC treated farmers with illnesses was another cause for concern. In Mille, as in the rest of Gamo, an ill person was normally treated with much sensitivity, and neighbours helped with cultivation and other work. But the cooperative showed no such sympathy. People complained, too, that despite all their labour they actually became poorer, could not afford to buy clothes, and sometimes earned barely enough to cover their debts. Some said they were forced to sell corrugated iron roofs to be able to pay for family clothes and additional food. The main source of their dissatisfaction, however, went back to the manner in which they had been forced to join the APC. They bitterly resented having to work like labourers on fields they had owned for centuries.

The State and the People

The Otchollo Mille APC was viewed as the best in the area, and its leader was a member of the central committee of the Workers Party of Ethiopia (WPE). The cooperative received loans and paid less in taxes than 'independent' mountain farmers. Whereas the latter were obliged to perform compulsory communal labour for up to three days a week during peak cultivation times, members of APCs worked only in the fields of their APC. In addition to providing labour, the independent farmers were also called upon to build school fences, clinics, police offices, and other government institutions free of charge. The state continued to perpetrate acts of dispossession, often through rural schools and adult education centres, which took large tracts of land and relied on the free labour of farmers for its cultivation. In Otchollo Mille, the adult education centre alone had ten hectares of land.[12] The Department of Agriculture and its subsidiary bodies laid claim to plots of various sizes for experimental purposes. There was no legal check on this appropriation of land.

In common meadows, in common pastures, and on hillsides (the main home areas of Otchollo and Chencha peasant associations), farmers were

[12] To the outsider observing the amount of land still held by the schools and adult training centres, it is obvious that this practice remains agriculturally focused and has nothing to do with the schools' or training centres' curricula.

instructed to plant eucalyptus trees. The income from the sale of trees benefited association leaders rather than farmers, and it intensified soil erosion and the shortage of pastures. Only farmers farther away from the roads were able to maintain a good balance of fields and common grazing areas.

The state's demands on the farmers' time, labour, and land were extended to military recruitment. Young conscripts were needed for the civil war raging in Ethiopia's north. The state exploited labour on its cotton farms. Highland farmers often contracted malaria when they worked in the lowlands, which obviously affected their farmwork considerably after they returned home. These practices by 'socialist' officials were in effect a continuation of the tradition of the conquest period and the original gabbar system. Both independent farmers and APC members were obliged to cultivate land without remuneration for those who had joined the armed forces. The farmers responded to these pressures by sending more sons to Addis Ababa and to other regional towns, where they worked as weavers. Their remittances helped with the payment of taxes, the cost of festivals, and the hiring of cultivators.

Struggling to hold onto power, the revolutionary government launched a scheme to irrigate the Otchollo fields in the late 1980s. Earlier training schemes had been introduced to provide farmers with basic agricultural skills as well as political indoctrination. None of these measures was very effective. When the revolutionary government, in a desperate attempt to boost the economy, announced plans in 1990 for limited private enterprise, it gave cooperative members the choice of remaining together as an APC or farming independently.[13] Otchollo Mille members did not hesitate. They moved at once to dismantle the roofs of their storehouses by night, lest the state change its mind. This dramatic action carried a whiff of revolution. Mille APC members refused to go to work the next morning and organised a demonstration to demand the prompt assignment of officials to distribute their assets. Neighbouring APCs reacted similarly. Underlying this response was their common interest in recovering lost land and their determination to keep the state at a distance.

Nationwide, nearly all of the APCs collapsed after the issuing of this directive, which allowed dissolution subject only to payment of arrears and equitable distribution of assets. In Otchollo Mille, more than 500 oxen and two tractors were sold to pay debts. Material from the demolished store-

[13] By 1985–86, when the APCs were on the verge of collapse, 20,367 qebele peasant associations had a total membership of nearly 5.7 million family heads (Central Statistics Office 1987: 35). In the same period, 2,323 APCs had a total membership of 190,372 (Central Statistics Office 1987: 36). Gamo Gofa, the province of my fieldwork, had 18 APCs, only 4 of which were classified as second stage (Ethiopian Mapping Authority 1988: 49).

houses was sold, and each member received a small sum from the proceeds. When the APC was established, 300 members had each nominally brought three hectares, but when it was dissolved the membership had grown to 405, leaving each person with substantially less.

Why did these cooperatives fail? One widely accepted explanation is that farmers were forced to join them in the first place and were just waiting for an opportunity to abandon them. Farmers rejected a system that created a class of toiling labourers, on the one hand, and a class of non-productive leaders, on the other. They furthermore rejected having to work alongside those who had been given land illegally.

Bolado Boqa, currently a resident in Otchollo Lante and a long-time fighter in the crown court for Otchollo land, became the first chairman of the post-APC Otchollo Lante qebele in 1991. He explained that a Department of Agriculture team had arrived to help the Lante APC distribute its assets. Each member received a bull and a substantial sum in cash. At the time of the collapse, there were 747 members. Founding members were given 1.33 hectares each, while those who had joined later received only 0.5 hectare. After taking charge of the new Association of Otchollo Lante, Bolado secretly took 75,000 Ethiopian birr to pay the Ethiopian Light and Power Authority to electrify his village. This money was partly left from the APC. Bolado's action was a precautionary measure, since it was rumoured that such cooperative legacies were otherwise likely to be appropriated by former guerrilla cadres.

Finally, although the collapse of the APCs was welcomed by members, their formation left a lasting impact on the dual house structure of Otchollo. The link between the upland neighbourhoods and the respective lowland homes and fields was severed for good.[14] Only a few clever families managed to maintain both mountain and lowland homes.

The Postsocialist Period

The introduction of a mixed economy effectively signalled the end of socialism. The revolutionary period was brought officially to an end in May 1991, when the northern guerrillas seized political power. The new government introduced ethnic federalism, rearranged the state structure, and reorganised the economy according to the neo-liberal principles recommended by international advisers. The new policy restricted farmers to ethnic territories, and the restructuring of the economy cut government subsidies, which were now channelled toward repayment of external debts.

[14] In other districts, the rupture was similar but less severe.

The ethnic policy was widely viewed as the 'Bantustanisation' of Ethiopia. It delineated settlements rigidly, imposed schooling in local languages, and isolated the disadvantaged groups of the south. A campaign of denigration over the following decade selectively condemned particular past injustices in order to legitimate the new power. The new hierarchical group taxonomies made groups appear fundamentally different from one another, when often the main difference lay in the territories they occupied and the different environments they inhabited. These new labels tribalised many of Ethiopia's southern groups, and the entire exoticising classification was characterised by a subtle racism.

As far as land was concerned, the new government recognised the decree of 1975 and kept most state farms under its control (Plant 1994: 24–25). It later established a privatisation agency, under pressure from international financial bodies. After the country was redrawn along ethnic lines and local politicians were assured of political rather than economic autonomy, the terms 'investor' and 'investment' became the new clichés for development. Whereas farmers were expected to live and work in one ethnic area, investor farmers were 'supra-ethnic' or 'farmers without borders'. People feared them as yet another variety of appropriators. Already several thousand hectares of fertile land in the western lowlands have been appropriated for such investors. More than a quarter of mountain pasture land was appropriated for state forest during the revolutionary period. If the state reallocates the remaining pastures, people fear a collapse of the entire system, because there would then be too little manure to support grain cultivation.

The postsocialist government 'tidied' the grassroots structure of farmers' associations, removing all those with political links to the previous regime. It went further than its predecessor by assigning political cadres to the Department of Agriculture, making it the most powerful department at the level of the *woreda*.[15] Having the political upper hand enabled this department to control the sale of chemical fertilisers and seeds and to threaten to evict farmers who chose indigenous seeds or animal manure. The ruling party and its regional partners, it was said, had a commitment to multinational trading companies, which had promised large sums in commissions to the agricultural experts and politicians who served as their agents. Besides using the threat of eviction, the department forced impoverished farmers to sell cows and sheep to pay arrears for 'services' they had received. The most common cause of crisis was the loss of animal manure, which seriously reduced yields. The sale of fertilisers and seeds was eventually halted in the late 1990s. In the lowland areas post-APC, the pressure by Department of

[15] A *woreda* is the administrative level above the grassroots. The woreda where research was carried out included 38 qebeles.

Agriculture officials to force farmers to buy fertilisers and seeds on credit was subverted some time before this, when farmers resorted to growing fruits for the markets in Addis.

The old practice of appropriating farmers' time and labour continued much as it had in the past. During my fieldwork I witnessed farmers ordered to work for three days a week: on the first day they planted trees on their common land, on the second they built a wooden bridge on a tributary of the Baso River, and on the third they repaired roads. Forced labour exists in both the lowlands and the mountains. Farmers unable to attend are put in the farmers' association cells by order of the chairperson, who is next in power to the development agent and a member of the ruling party.

Having tried every possible means to regain their land and having failed, the people of Otchollo and Chencha seemed to have one new option left—the ethnic policy. They articulated the need for group members to tighten their grip on land in their territory, and for others to do the same in their place of origin. However, unlike groups in other regions, where bloody incidents took place as local people sought to exclude others by violent means (Tronvoll 2000: 23), the Gamo had always lived in peace with their neighbours.

Although the 1975 decree prohibited the sale of land, the land market continued regardless. In recent years it has intensified in both mountain and lowland fields. Land has been sold under the guise of contracts to help purchasers and to discourage the reclaiming of land by kin. In most cases, however, traditional arrangements are preferred, which allow kin the right to reclaim land provided they pay back the original sum and some extra money called *hommo* (literally, 'foam'), fixed by the elders.[16] In the lowlands, owners leased out their banana fields for up to ten years. A strict rule requiring that land sales or leasing be restricted to members of the community has been effective.

Income in the lowlands has soared, and the majority of farmers no longer grow any grain. Instead, they produce fruits for export and raise animals for milk and for the local market. Coffee is planted under the canopies of mango trees, which adds to their incomes. Income from lime and papaya trees is more modest but also helps with the cost of laundry soap, electric bills, children's textbooks, veterinary costs, and transportation to the town of Arba Minch.

The government is attempting to promote voluntary cooperatives along the lines advocated by the International Labour Organisation, but

[16] I witnessed several cases of land reclaimed by kin. *Hommo* was paid to those who had purchased land in the late 1970s. This is additional money paid to the purchaser on top of the original price, as compensation for the purchaser's investment in the land.

lowland farmers are deeply suspicious of institutions that their government encouraged them to abandon only a decade ago. In the mountains, some farmers have joined a highland fruit growers' cooperative. Since it did not aim to appropriate land or require members to work alongside strangers, people were comfortable in joining. This cooperative has made considerable profit over the last few years; it is controlled by the Department of Agriculture, but a majority of its members belong to the Qale Hiwot Church (evangelical Christian).

This church and a Christian NGO called World Vision Ethiopia are in fierce competition with the Department of Agriculture to win farmer support. All three organisations run agricultural projects in the woreda. The competition turns not on how best to help farmers but on issues of the religious conversion of 'heathen' farmers who agree to be 'saved'. The Department of Agriculture provides cadres, seeds, and fertilisers and recruits political party members. The Christian organisations have 'religious cadres' whose job is to teach the Bible, denigrate tradition, and accuse the fathers of the land of 'devil worship', a concept alien to Gamo thought. Of the three, the Qale Hiwot Church seems to be popular in its inclusiveness. Its representatives inseminate cows belonging to non-Christians for the same price as others, and they offer their services without setting unreasonable conditions. The farmers become confused, as they can not readily differentiate between the state institution and the religious NGOs, since all claim that they wish to provide assistance to local people. A fourth force, the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, is viewed by the other two religious groups as an accomplice to the conquest, the slave raiding, and the gabbar past. It condemns the NGO and the Qale Hiwot Church of being 'aliens' and 'anti-Mary'. Although the current constitution prescribes secularism, the state on the ground is perceived as having a religious dimension.

Amidst these struggles for recognition and following, the majority of Gamo people are religious pluralists. They profess *Beni Woga* (teachings of 'Old Gamo' religion) and *Essa Woga* (teachings of the prophet Essa) and at the same time follow the teachings one or more of the Qale Hiwot, Mulu Wengel, Seventh-Day Adventist, Mekane Yesus, and Ethiopian Orthodox churches. The Christian organisations are well represented in local governments; they are financially better off and powerful. They campaigned against Gamo traditions and practices such as terracing and manure cultivation, and later they reintroduced the same practices to the Gamo as 'innovations'. These various churches compete to occupy hilltops and groves sacred to the traditional religion, as proof and symbol of their own superiority. What from the outside appears to be an ethnically defined unit of a federal state is in fact

a fighting ground of rich Christian sects, all seeking to impose their will over the Gamo.

Current Agrarian Policy

At the national level, the concerns of the rural south have not been noticed or understood. Article 40.3 of the December 1994 constitution specified that 'the right of ownership of rural and urban land as well as of all natural resources is exclusively vested in the state and in the peoples of Ethiopia. Land is a common property of the Nations, Nationalities and Peoples of Ethiopia and shall not be subject to sale or to other means of exchange'. This was qualified in the following three subsections. Article 40.4 stated that 'Ethiopian peasants have the right to obtain land without payment and the protection against eviction from their possession'. Article 40.5 specified the entitlements of pastoralists and stated that 'Ethiopian pastoralists have the right to free land for grazing and cultivation as well as the right not to be displaced from their own lands'. Article 40.6 introduced entitlements of yet another category: 'Without prejudice to the right of Ethiopian Nations, Nationalities and Peoples to the ownership of land, the government shall ensure the right of private investors to the use of land on the basis of payment arrangements established by law'. The constitution thus recognised nations, nationalities, and peoples as categories of citizens with guaranteed rights to land, but the addition of 'peasants', 'pastoralists', and 'private investors' could only lead to confusion.

Neither the constitution nor a policy document recently released by the government (Ministry of Information 2001) reveals any understanding of the coexistence of multiple tenure systems and the long struggle of southern Ethiopian peoples to maintain them and to persist as groups in their unique social and physical environment. Government policy sees land as a readily available and alienable object. It denies the supernatural link between humans and their land and does not acknowledge the received wisdom of the local people themselves. The resolutions of the ruling party imagine farmers to be robot-like, insensitive creatures, fit only to labour and produce according to party instructions. The state engages in 'research', provides 'efficient extension services', and assigns trained experts to provide guidance, but the main emphasis is on extensive use of farmer's own labour to transform rural life.

Although the recent document does recognise that the traditional knowledge of herders can be valuable, it recommends a settlement programme as the only meaningful solution for herding peoples (Ministry of Information 2001: 141–45). As elsewhere in Africa, pastoralism is viewed as an abnormal lifestyle. The policy aims to establish market-driven agricul-

tural development capable of breaking into world markets. It also envisions the reintroduction of mass associations and cooperatives, albeit with minimal political involvement, and promises rural banking and credit services to increase investment in agriculture, while acknowledging the weakness of past practices (Ministry of Information 2001: 186–93). The policy document concludes by stressing the importance of political positions in farmers' associations, credit associations, cooperatives, and all rural state institutions, in order to give effective leadership; the implication is that without such paternalistic state intervention, farmers will be unable to cultivate their fields.

In sum, this policy document is an attempt to blend neo-liberal recommendations with strong centralised state planning. It views farmers through the eyes of gabbar owners, Italian colonists, and later qalad holders—as sources of labour. Above all, current state policy ignores the various peoples of southern Ethiopia, who view their agricultural systems as sustainable. They want the state to acknowledge pre-conquest tenure, to give back the land it has alienated for forests and state farms, and to put an end to the alienation of land. They see state involvement in agriculture as a source of famine and exploitation.

Conclusion

For more than a century, farmers in southern Ethiopia have been prevented from devoting their time and labour to advancing their own lives. They have experienced something close to enslavement. Failing to recognise various indigenous tenure systems, the state has alienated pastures, forest groves, and even secondary home areas for itself and for the benefit of settlers from elsewhere. Its villagisation scheme undermined people's established links to their environment, without considering the grave consequences of the attendant ecological disturbances.

Farmers had high hopes of the postsocialist government, which condemned the practices of its predecessors and dismantled the previous political structures. Soon, however, the new government established its own political structures and recaptured power in rural areas by assigning political activists to the farmers' associations. The government now presents itself as a trader in agricultural products and a provider of credit, but in the eyes of the farmers this is insufficient to distinguish it from NGOs and religious organisations. These are posing new property claims over important resources such as common pastures, ritual forest groves, and scenic hilltops.

In spite of all these tensions, life continues in both lowland and mountain settlements in creative ways. Lowland farmers have resorted to fruit production as a way to avoid state interference in their agricultural practices.

Leasing to insiders takes place for attractive sums, and both landowners and labourers seem satisfied. Mountain farmers have intensified fruit production in order to supplement grain production and earn higher incomes than their counterparts in the lowlands. However, because of the small sizes of their holdings, more families are sending their sons to work as itinerant weavers, to gain supplementary income. Some mountain farmers work as migrant labourers in surrounding areas. Pre-emptive division of pastures close to motor roads (and therefore visible to government officials) has largely succeeded in protecting land from appropriation by the state and from new claimants such as the churches and other institutions. The link between main and secondary houses was severed by the formation of the APCs, and it has not been possible to mend this link after their collapse. Recently, however, there are signs that some people in both Otchollo and Chencha have started to re-create kinship, economic, and ritual links between the main houses and the lowland homes.

The constitution of December 1994 does not recognise indigenous tenure and makes no attempt to redress the injustices of the past. The latest statement of rural policy, published in November 2001, foresees a re-entrenchment of the state in structures of rural power on a scale unknown since the gabbar days. It recommends an aggressive extension package to be led by politically active experts, who are expected to be based in grassroots rural settlements. The solutions suggested in this policy document are productionist and demeaning to the people, who continue to hope for government acknowledgment of indigenous tenure, which, unlike state tenure, they see as humane and flexible. They see state involvement as the cause of great suffering and ask only to be allowed to lead a secure life, free from the fear and famine they have experienced ever since the 1890s, whenever the state has drawn closer.

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"... anthropology needs a broader vision. It needs to shake off its strong association with the primitive and the exotic and become genuinely global in its comparisons. From this perspective, more sustained attention to Eurasia and a renewed focus on its underlying unity might launch the transformation of our parochial scholarly traditions into a mature cosmopolitan science."
– Chris Hann, in his Preface to this series

The Postsocialist Agrarian Question
Property Relations and the Rural Condition

This is an age of neo-liberalism, in which the advantages and virtues of private property are often taken for granted. Postsocialist governments have privatized and broken up state farms and socialist cooperatives. However, economic outcomes and the social insecurity now experienced by many rural inhabitants highlight the need for a broader anthropological analysis of property relations, which goes beyond changes in legal form. A century after Kautsky addressed 'The Agrarian Question' in Germany, it is therefore necessary to address a postsocialist Agrarian Question throughout Central and Eastern Europe, the former Soviet Union and China.

The studies collected here derive from the first cycle of projects at the Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology. They are prefaced by a substantial Introduction by Chris Hann, a Founding Director of the Institute.

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